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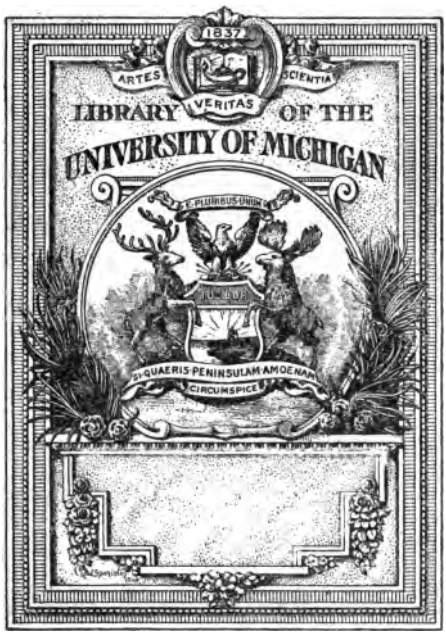
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THE

VILLAGE CURATE,

A

5-88-21

POEM.

By James Hurdis, D.D.

Dum relego scripsisse pudet, quia plurima cerno,
Me quoque qui feci judice, digna lini.

The SECOND EDITION corrected.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, N° 72, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD,

MDCCXC.

THE

VILLAGE CURATE.

OF Man's firſt diſobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whoſe mortal taſte
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loſs of Eden—of the glorious year,
In all her changes fair; of gentle Spring,
Veil'd in a ſhow'r of roſes and perfumes,
Refulgent Summer in the pride of youth,
Mild Autumn with her wain and wheaten ſheaf,
Or ſullen Winter, loud, and tyrannous,
Let nobler poets ſing. Sit thou apart,
And on thine own Parnaſſus ſweep the lyre,
Applauded Hayley, by the Muſes taught
That in thoſe fairy groves delight to dwell

Thy hand has rear'd. And thou, ſurpaſſing bard,
That pris'ner to ſome fair one's will haſt ſung
Thy Taſk ſo ſweetly, ſtrike again the ſtrong,
The bold, the various energetic chord,
Secure and happy in thy far retreat.
Be mine the taſk to ſing the man how bleſt,
The Village Curate. From no foreign ſhore
Came he a wand'ring fugitive, and toſt
On angry ſeas, to pleaſe a poet's gods,
At length ſcarce reach'd the hoſpitable port.
With Father Brute he boaſts not to have left
The tott'ring ſtate of Priam, nor his blood
Can ſhew by lineal catalogue ſo pure
And only Britiſh, that no rude invader
Of Daniſh, Saxon, or of Norman breed,
Has mix'd with his god-ſprung progenitors.
He has not clomb the high and hoary tops
Of Snowdon or Plinlimmon, yet in heart
A truer Briton lives not; thee he loves,
O happy England, and will love thee ſtill.

In yonder manſion, rear'd by ruſtick hands,
And deck'd with no ſuperfluous ornament,
Where uſe was all the architect propos'd,
And all the maſter wiſh'd, that ſcarce a mile
From village tumult, to the morning ſun
Turns his warm aſpect, yet with bloſſoms hung
Of cherry, and of peach, lives happy ſtill
The reverend Alcanor. On a hill,
Half way between the ſummit and a brook
That idly wanders at the foot, it ſtands,
And looks into a valley wood-beſprent,
That winds along below. Beyond the brook,
Where the high coppice intercepts it not,
Or ſocial elms, or with his ample waiſt
The venerable oak, up the ſteep ſide
Of yon aſpiring hill full oppoſite,
Luxuriant paſture ſpreads before his eye
Eternal verdure; ſave that here and there
A ſpot of deeper green ſhews where the ſwain
Expects a nobler harveſt, or high poles

Mark the retreat of the ſcarce-budded hop,
To be hereafter eminently fair,
And hide the naked ſtaff that train'd him up
With golden flow'rs. On the hill-top behold
The village ſteeple, riſing from the midſt
Of many a ruſtick edifice; 'tis all
The paſtor's care. For he, ye whipping clerks,
Who with a jockey's ſpeed from morn till night
Gallop amain through ſermons, ſervices,
And dirty roads, and hardly find the day
Sufficient for your toil—he ſtill diſdains
For lucre-ſake to do his work amiſs,
And ſtarve the flock he undertakes to feed.

Nor does he envy your ignoble eaſe,
Ye pamper'd Prieſts, that only eat and ſleep,
And ſleep and eat, and quaff the tawny juice
Of vet'ran port: ſleep on, and take your reſt,
Nor quit the downy couch preferment ſtrews
To aid your maſter. While Alcanor lives,

Though

Though Providence no greater meed deſign
To crown his labour, than the ſcanty ſum
One cure affords, yet will he not regret
That he renounc'd a life ſo profitleſs
To God and to his country. For he too
Might ſtill have ſlumber'd in an eaſy chair,
Or idly loll'd upon a ſofa, held
A willing captive in the magic chain
Of Alma-mater, but in happy time
Serious occaſion cut the golden link,
And ſet him free, to taſte the nobler ſweets
Of life domeſtic. There th' apoſtate lives,
In habitation neat, but plain and ſmall.
Look in and ſee, for there no treaſon lurks,
And he who lives as in the face of Heav'n
Shuns not the eye of man. On either ſide
The door that opens with a touch, a room,
The kitchen one, and what you will the other.
There now he ſits in meditation loſt,
And to the growing page commits with ſpeed

To-morrow's text. Look round, nor fear to rouſe
The buſy ſoul, that on her work intent,
Holds ſenſe a priſ'ner, and with cautious bolt
Has barr'd full-faſt the portals of the mind,
To ſhut out interruption. Bare the walls—
For here no painter's happy art has taught
The great progenitor to live anew
Upon the ſmiling canvaſs. Sculpture here
No ornament has hung of fruit or flow'r.
Nor ſpecimen is here, to ſhew how well
The imitative ſtyle can ſteal the grace
That Nature lent the Painter. One poor ſheet,
Half almanack, half print, without a frame,
Above the grate hangs unaccompanied:
A kind remembrancer of time to come,
Of faſt and feſtival, expiring terms,
New moon and full. A regal table here
Arreſts the eye, and here the vaſt account
Of Chancellor, High Steward, and their train,
Vice-chancellor, and Proctors, awful ſound,

And

And ſtill more awful ſight to him that treads
The public ſtreet with hat and ſtick, or wants
That grave appendage of the chin, a band.
Above behold the venerable pile
Some pious Founder rais'd; but ſtay we not
To call him from his grave, where he perhaps
Would gladly reſt unknown, and have an ear
Not to be rous'd by the Archangel's trump.

Yon half-a-dozen ſhelves ſupport, vaſt weight!
The Curate's Library. There marſhall'd ſtand,
Sages and heroes, modern and antique:
He their commander, like the vanquiſh'd fiend,
Out-caſt of Heav'n, oft thro' their armed files
Darts an experienc'd eye, and feels his heart
Diſtend with pride to be their only chief.
Yet needs he not the tedious muſter-roll,
The title-page of each well-known, his name,
And character. Nor ſcorns he to converſe

With raw recruit or muſty veteran,
And oft prefers the mutilated garb
To macaroni ſuit, bedaub'd with gold,
That often hides the man of little worth,
And tinſel properties. What need of dreſs
So fine and gorgeous, if the ſoul within
Be chaſte and pure? The faireſt maſk put on
Hides not the wrinkle of deformity.
A ſoul of worth will gild a beggar's frieze,
And on his tatter'd ſuit a luſtre ſhed
No time can change. Give to the harlot's cheek
The glowing rouge, true virtue needs it not.
Shed perfumes in the chambers of the ſick,
The lip of health has odours of its own.

. . . . . .

Now mark we, what the maſter moſt eſteems,
Yon antiquated thing, whoſe ſhapeleſs bulk
Fills half his room, the name a harpſichord.
In days remote the artiſt liv'd, whoſe hand

Firſt ſmooth'd the burniſh'd ſurface, haply ſprung
From line of Jubal, whoſe ingenious race
Firſt taught the harp and organ. Thence it came,
Like great Atrides' ſceptre, handed down
From Vulcan's ſmithy: to his chatterbox,
The pert and nimble-finger'd Argicide
Jove gave it, he to Pelops, and ſo on.
So when his Grace a thread-bare coat diſcards,
He gives it to his valet, he to Tom,
And Tom to Dick; then ſwings it for a while
Under a penthouſe-ſhade in Monmouth-ſtreet.
It travels once again from back to back,
Of prentice, poet, pedlar, till at length,
Quite out at elbows, and of buttons ſtript,
Powder'd and greaſy, to ſome beggar's brat
It falls, a golden prize. Such the deſcent
Alcanor's inſtrument may boaſt; but he
More for its preſent uſe the thing eſteems,
Than could its ancient pedigree be trac'd
E'en to the days of old Cadwallader.

What

What boots it, O ye titled great, to ſhew
The noble anceſtor of regal line,
Whoſe valour bound an enemy in chains,
Or patriotic wiſdom ſav'd a ſtate;
To be allied to men of wit and worth,
The glory of the world; if in yourſelves
No ſpark of virtue live? Who can eſteem
The man that all his dignity derives
From honors not his own? Give me the ſteed
Whoſe noble efforts bore the prize away,
I care not for his grandſire or his dam;
Be thine the nag of admirable port,
That ſpare and ſinewleſs ſtill lags behind,
I aſk him not, though ſprung of Galathy,
Bucephalus, or Pegaſe. Yet I grant,
Where goodneſs is to greatneſs near allied,
And blood and virtue for one empire ſtrive,
The man that has them is a man indeed.
Nor, truſt me, is the world ſo worthleſs grown,
But ſuch there are, and ſuch my ſoul eſteems.

That

That ample caſe, that underneath the frame
Of harpſichord ſo ſmooth, in ſhape uncouth
Repoſes, from the morning broom defends
A viol-baſs, elſe long ago deſtroy'd
By the rude blows of ſlattern Dorothy.
For ſhe, a ſubtle wit, can plainly ſee
No worth in that whoſe worth is far remov'd
Beyond her ſight, and reach: ſo, critic-like,
She ſweeps away her cobweb with a friſk,
And cruſhes many a pearl. That ſmaller caſe
A violin protects, ſtill ſafe and ſound,
Though tumbled oft upon the parlour floor
With proud diſdain, and ruin muſical.
Six aſhen chairs, a table, and a grate,
Poker and tongs, make up the vaſt account.

Such is Alcanor's houſhold, ſuch his ſtate,
Save what might yet be ſung in higher ſtrains,
Of pan and kettle, barrel, broom, and ſtool,
The furniture of waſh-houſe, kitchen vaſt,

And

And cellar ill-beſtow'd; imperial themes,
And worthy meditation infinite.
Save too the tedious invent'ry above,
Of bed and blanket, old bureau, and chair.
Beſides what ornaments the ſkyey neſt
Of high-aſpiring Dorothy. A maid
Is ſhe, that ſleeps in the moon's neighbourhood,
And often hears the golden ſhow'r deſcend
Upon the tiles above, nor dreads aſſault
From maid-deceiving Jove. Too wiſe were he
To ſeek Caliſto under Dian's noſe.
Let the fair ſilver-ſhafted Queen depart,
And Jove may come to woo her in the dark;
She too has beauty that demands a veil,
O hide her from him or ſhe wins him not.

Reader, methinks diſpleaſure clouds thy brow,
And Scorn prepares her poiſon'd arrows, perch'd
On that protruded lip. 'Is this the man,
'The Poet ſings, that ſtranger to the world

'Suffers

'Suffers the ſpeedy wick of life to burn
'E'en to the ſocket, and the duty done
'One church affords, the reſt of life gives up
'To ſelfiſh eaſe? Are theſe the nobler ſweets
'Of life domeſtic? Was it but for this
'Alcanor fled the publick walks of life,
'And bleſt the ſerious cauſe that ſet him free
'From Alma-mater's chain? Nobler it were
'To mingle with the buſy world, and be
'As others are, than ſit at home ſupine
'And ſedulous to pleaſe himſelf alone.
'I grant him innocent and free from blame,
'Yet curſe the bliſs that centres in itſelf.
'Give me the man who cannot taſte a joy
'That none partakes.'—A truce, my gentle friend,
For ſuch Alcanor is. Not for himſelf
He ſought the lonely cell remote, and ſtor'd
His humble manſion with reſources ſweet
Of intellectual bliſs. To other eyes
And other ears the letter'd page unfolds

Ambroſial

Ambroſial food, the honey of reſearch.
'Tis not to pleaſe Alcanor's ſelf alone,
Or frantic Dorothy, ſo oft is heard
The melting ſound of ſweet-ton'd harmony.
In chambers yet unſung three Fairies dwell,
Each to Alcanor bound, and near in blood,
But nearer in affection. Julia ſhe,
Who holds the rein of houſhold management,
And moderates with ſkill the laviſh hand
Of haſty Dorothy. Eliza next,
Of aſpect mild and ever-blooming cheek;
Good humour there, and innocence, and health
Perennial roſes ſhed. It is a May
That never quits her bluſh, but ſtill the ſame
Is ſeen in Summer, Autumn, Winter, Spring;
Save when it glows with a ſuperior red,
Kiſs'd by the morning breeze, or lighted up
At ſound of commendation well-beſtow'd
Under the down-caſt eye of modeſt worth,
That ſhrinks at its own praiſe. Ye thoughtleſs belles,

That

That day by day the faſhionable round
Of diſſipation tread, ſtealing from art
The bluſh Eliza owns, to hide a cheek
Pale and deſerted, come, and learn of me
How to be ever blooming, young, and fair.
Give to the mind improvement. Let the tongue
Be ſubject to the heart and head. Withdraw
From city ſmoke, and trip with agile foot,
Oft as the day begins, the ſteepy down
Or velvet lawn, earning the bread you eat.
Riſe with the lark, and with the lark to bed.
The breath of night 's deſtructive to the hue
Of ev'ry flow'r that blows. Go to the field,
And aſk the humble daiſy why it ſleeps
Soon as the ſun departs? Why cloſe the eyes
Of bloſſoms infinite, ere the ſtill moon
Her oriental veil put off? Think why,
Nor let the ſweeteſt bloſſom be expos'd
That nature boaſts, to night's unkindly damp.
Well may it droop, and all its freſhneſs loſe,

Compell'd

Compell'd to taſte the rank and pois'nous ſteam
Of midnight theatre, and morning ball.
Give to repoſe the ſolemn hour ſhe claims,
And from the forehead of the morning ſteal
The ſweet occaſion. O there is a charm
The morning has, that gives the brow of age
A ſmack of youth, and makes the lip of youth
Shed perfumes exquiſite. Expect it not,
Ye who till noon upon a down-bed lie,
Indulging fev'rous ſleep, or wakeful dream
Of happineſs no mortal heart has felt
But in the regions of romance. Ye fair,
Like you it muſt be woo'd, or never won.
And being loſt, it is in vain ye aſk
For milk of roſes and Olympian dew.
Coſmetic art no tincture can afford
The faded feature to reſtore: No chain,
Be it of gold, and ſtrong as adamant,
Can fetter beauty to the fair one's will.

But

But leave me not the gentle Iſabel
Unſung, though nature on her cheek no roſe
Has planted, and the lily bloſſom there
Without a rival—Look within, and learn
That nature often on the mind beſtows
What ſhe denies the face.—O, ſhe is kind,
And gives to ev'ry man his proper gift,
To make him needful in the land he lives.
There is not inequality ſo ſtrange
'Twixt man and man, as haughty wits ſuppoſe.
The beggar treads upon the monarch's heel
For excellence, and often wears a heart
Of noble temper, under filth and rags:
While he that reigns, in ſpite of outward pomp,
Is mean and beggarly within, and far outweigh'd
By the offenſive lazar at his gate.
Th' unletter'd fool that daily ſteers the plough,
With vacant head, and heart as unimprov'd
As the dull brute he drives, gives to the world
A neceſſary good, which all thy pains,

Ingenious Critic, or thy deep reſearch,
Profound Philoſopher, thy preaching, Clerk,
Thy prattle, Lawyer, or thy grave demurs,
Coſtly Phyſician, hardly ſhall exceed.
The kingly tulip captivates the eye,
But ſmelt we loath, while the ſweet violet,
That little beauty boaſts, hid from the ſight,
With ſuch a fragrant perfume hits the ſenſe
As makes us love ere we behold. And ſo
The gaudy peacock of the feather'd race
The nobleſt ſeems, till the ſweet note be heard
That nightly cheers the muſing poet's ear
Under the thorny brake; and then we grant,
That little Philomel, ſo unadorn'd,
Needs not the aid of plumes. So, Iſabel,
Internal worth upon thy cheek beſtows
A roſe's beauty, tho' no roſe be there.
A heart that almoſt breaks to be rebuk'd,
A mind inform'd, yet fearful to be ſeen,
Kept by a tongue that never but at home,

And

And cautious then, its golden truſt betrays—
Theſe are thy charms, and they are charms for me,
And in my eye as ſweet a grace beſtow,
As matchleſs beauty, trick'd in airy ſmiles
And ſuit of fantaſy, what time ſhe trips
With foot inaudible the ſprightly round
Of fairy dance, outſhining ev'ry ſtar
And planet of the night. And theſe ſhall laſt,
As morning fair and freſh as amaranth,
When all thy triumphs, Beauty, are no more.

Here let us pauſe. For learned jockeys ſay,
'Tis good to give one's ſteed a morning draught.
And he that will may whet his whiſtle too
With dram of gin or cordial peppermint,
The journey ſcarce begun. Tedious the way,
Thro' many a diſmal lane, and darkſome wood,
In ſtory famous for the murder done
On nightly traveller. And aſk the ſot
Who daily drives the clattering ſtage, with face

Red as a butcher's beef, and coat of proof,
Laſhing his rawbon'd ſteeds to be in time,
Now ſwearing, drinking now, now cutting jokes,
Now laughing loud, and now with ſurly heel
Stamping the boot—aſk him, I ſay, if drink
Be not the ſoul of labour. What could he,
The frequent pot denied, the ſmiling bowl,
And ever and again returning dram?
Or aſk the drunken fool, that all day long
Or drinks, or lolls upon an alehouſe bench,
With pot in hand, and thirſty pipe in mouth.
Sons of Anacreon, ſay whence the laugh
That ſhakes the very roof, at ev'ry pauſe
Of the loud ſong with Stentrophonic voice
Bray'd forth? Or you, ye gallant bucks and bloods,
Say whence your noble exploits, to beſet
Fair Thais, kick the waiter, break the lamps,
Cry fire, and bid defiance to the watch?
Join your ſhrill pipes, ye maids of Billingſgate,
And market dames, and make the chorus full.

'O, there

'O, there is nothing noble to be done
'Till we have ſwallow'd pint on pint. 'Tis drink,
'And only drink, that makes the world go round.'

I praiſe you not; and if there be a man
Who thus far has perus'd my careleſs page,
In hopes to find a palliative to vice,
Here let us part.—An enemy to mirth
Who deems me, does me wrong. I hold it good
To laugh away a portion of my days,
And give to mirth her ſong, to ſport her feather.
But he that draws his wit to ſtab at truth,
And is the friend of folly when he ſmiles,
Has liv'd too long. O let me never be
Virtue's aſſaſſin, or the ſhield of vice.
Kind Heaven, if there be an hour ſo black
Yet lodg'd in future time; O cut me off
Ere it arrive, and ſend me to my grave
E'en in the pride and glory of my ſtrength.

YE gentle Pow'rs (if any ſuch there be,
And if there be not, 'tis a ſweet miſtake
To think there be) that day by day, unſeen,
Where ſouls unanimous, and link'd in love,
In ſober converſe ſpend the vacant hour,
Hover above, and in the cup of life
A cordial pour that all its bitter drowns,
And gives the haſty minutes as they paſs
Unwonted fragrance; come and aid my ſong,
In that clear fountain of eternal love
That flows for ay at the right hand of him,
The great Incomprehenſible ye ſerve,
Dip my advent'rous pen, that nothing vile,
Of the chaſte eye or ear unworthy, may
In this my early ſong be ſeen or heard.

Proceed

Proceed we then to mark the Curate's ſteps,
His mode of living, manners, and purſuits,
As down the ſteep declivity of life
He glides, and haſtens to the hungry grave.
One year the limits of our ſong confine,
From early ſpring till ſpring return again.

Then let the muſe begin, when Winter yet
Powders the lawn with ſnow, and on our eaves
Hangs the chaſte icicle. Be that the time,
When the tir'd ſportſman lays his gun aſide,
Nor wages ineffectual war again
On partridge race. The day St. Valentine,
When maids are briſk, and at the break of day
Start up, and turn their pillows, all agog
To know what happy ſwain the fates provide
A mate for life. Then follows vaſt diſcharge
Of true-love knots and ſonnets nicely penn'd,
But to the learned critic's eye no verſe,
But proſe diſtracted, galloping away

Like yelping cur with kettle at his tail.
Forgive the thought, ye maids of poeſy,
And be as kind as fair. A man may laugh
And yet approve, and I your pains applaud,
Tho' ſhort of excellence. I love the maid
That has ambition, and betrays a mind
Of active and ingenious turn; that ſcorns
Only to be what Faſhion and the age
Require, and can do more than flirt her fan,
Read novels, dance with grace, ſing playhouſe airs,
Talk ſcandal, daub or vellum or her face,
Retain ſome half-a-dozen terms in French,
And half as many Engliſh, and diſpatch
By ev'ry poſt a tedious manuſcript,
Which to tranſlate would crack the very brain
Of Arabic Profeſſor. O ye fair,
Ye were deſign'd for nobler flights than theſe.
Nature on you as well as us beſtow'd
The good capacity. And though to us
She gave the nicer judgment, yet ſhe hid

The ſweet defect in you, with better ſkill
To clothe the fair idea, keener eye,
And quicker apprehenſion. 'Tis in you
Imagination glows in all her ſtrength,
Gay as the robe of ſpring, and we delight
To ſee you pluck her bloſſoms, and compoſe
The cheerful noſegay for the ſwain you love.
What if Alcanor's ſelf ſhould not diſdain
To imitate your heart, but ſometimes hang
Ill-woven chaplets on Maria's brow,
That needs no ornament to ſet it off
With better grace. The hour ſo ſpent ſhall live,
Not unapplauded, in the book of heav'n.
For dear and precious as the moments are,
Permitted man, they are not all for deeds
Of active virtue. Give we none to vice,
And Heav'n will not ſtrict reparation aſk
For many a ſummer's day and winter's eve
So ſpent as beſt amuſes us. Alas!
If he that made us were extreme to mark

The trifled hour, what human ſoul could live?
We trifle all, and he that beſt deſerves
Is but a trifler. What art thou whoſe eye
Follows my pen, or what am I that write?
Both triflers. 'Tis a trifling world, from him
That banquets daintily in ſleeves of lawn,
To him that ſtarves upon a country cure:
From him that is the pilot of a ſtate,
To him that begs, and rather begs than works.

Then blame we not Alcanor for his pains,
Nor think him miſemploy'd, what time he ſits
Eager to clothe the new-born thought, and wooes
The maiden Meditation, hard to win,
For terms of apt ſignificance. Nor then,
When winter better pleas'd puts on a ſmile,
And round his garden at high noon he walks,
Not unattended, and the daffodil
And early ſnowdrop welcomes, penſive flow'r.
Nor needs he then excuſe, what time he ſtarts,

To

To mark the progreſs of the morning ſun,
As northward from his equinox he ſteers
And once again brings on the glorious year.
Sweet are the graces that the ſteps attend
Of early morning, when, the clouded brow
Of winter ſmooth'd, up from her orient couch
She ſprings, and like a maid betroth'd, puts on
Her bridal ſuit, and with an ardent ſmile
Comes forth to greet her ſwain. And to my eye,
As well as thine, Alcanor, grateful 'tis,
Ay, paſſing ſweet, to mark the cautious pace
Of ſlow-returning Spring, e'en from the time
When firſt the matted apricot unfolds
His tender bloom, till the full orchard glows;
From when the gooſeberry firſt ſhews a leaf,
Till the high wood is clad, and the broad oak
Gives to the fly-ſtung ox a ſhade at noon
Sun proof. How charming 'tis, to ſee ſweet May
Laugh in the rear of winter, and put on
Her gay apparel to begin anew

The wanton year. See were ſhe comes again
As fair, as young, as briſk, as when from heav'n
Before the author of the world ſhe trip'd
To Paradiſe rejoicing: the light breeze
Wafts to the ſenſe a thouſand odours; Hark!
The cheerful muſick that attends.

O Man,
Would on thyſelf alone the awful doom
Of death had paſt. It grieves me to the ſoul
To think how ſoon the blooming year ſhall fade,
How ſoon the leafy honours of the vale
Be ſhed, the bloſſom nipt, and the bare branch
Howl dreary muſic in the ear of winter.
Yet let us live, and while we may, rejoice,
And not our preſent joy diſturb, with thought
Of evils ſure to come, and by no art
Be ſhun'd.

Come hither, fool, that vainly think'ſt
Thine only is the art to plumb the depth

Of

Of truth and wiſdom. 'Tis a friend that calls,
And has ſome honeſt pity left for thee,
O thoughtleſs ſtubborn Sceptic. Look abroad,
And tell me, ſhall we to blind chance aſcribe
The ſcene ſo wonderful, ſo fair, and good?
Shall we no farther ſearch than ſenſe will lead,
To find the glorious cauſe that ſo delights
The eye and ear, and ſcatters all about
Ambroſial perfumes? O there is a hand
That operates unſeen, and regulates
The vaſt machine we tread on. Yes, there is
Who firſt created the great world, a work
Of deep conſtruction, complicately wrought,
Wheel within wheel; tho' 'tis in vain we ſtrive
To trace remote effects thro' the thick maze
Of movements intricate, confus'd and ſtrange,
Up to the great Artificer that made,
And guides the whole. What if we ſee him not?
No more can we behold the buſy ſoul
That animates ourſelves. Man to himſelf

Is all a miracle. I cannot ſee
The latent cauſe, yet ſuch I know there is,
That gives the body motion, nor can tell
By what ſtrange impulſe, the ſo ready limb
Performs the purpoſes of will. How then
Shall thou or I, who cannot ſpan ourſelves,
In this our narrow veſſel, comprehend
The being of a God. Go to the ſhore,
Caſt in thy ſlender angle, and draw out
The huge Leviathan. Compreſs the deep,
And ſhut it up within the hollow round
Of the ſmall hazel nut. Or freight the ſhell
Of ſnail or cockle, with the glorious ſun,
And all the worlds that live upon his beams,
The goodly apparatus that rides round
The glowing axle-tree of heaven. Then come,
And I will grant 'tis thine to ſcale the height
Of wiſdom infinite, and comprehend
Secrets incomprehenſible; to know
There is no God, and what the potent cauſe

That

That the revolving univerſe upholds,
And not requires a deity at hand.

O tell me not, moſt ſubtle diſputant,
That I ſhall die, the wick of life conſum'd,
And ſpite of all my hopes drop in the grave,
Never to riſe again. Will the great God,
Who thus by annual miracle reſtores
The periſh'd year, and youth and beauty gives,
By reſurrection ſtrange, where none was aſk'd,
Leave only man to be the ſcorn of time
And ſport of death? Shall only he one ſpring,
One haſty ſummer, and one autumn ſee,
And then to winter irredeemable
Be doom'd, caſt out, rejected, and deſpis'd?
Tell me not ſo, or by thyſelf enjoy
The melancholy thought. Am I deceiv'd?
So let me be for ever. If I err,
It is an error ſweet and lucrative.
For ſhould not heaven a farther courſe intend

Than the ſhort race of life, I am at leaſt
Thrice happier than thee, ill-boding fool,
Who ſtriv'ſt in vain the awful doom to fly
That I not fear. But I *ſhall* live again,
And ſtill on that ſweet hope ſhall my ſoul feed.
A medicine it is, that with a touch
Heals all the pains of life; a precious balm,
That makes the tooth of ſorrow venomleſs,
And of her hornet ſting ſo keen diſarms
Cruel Adverſity ——

A truce to thought,
And come, Alcanor, Julia, Iſabel,
Eliza come, and let us o'er the fields,
Acroſs the down, or thro' the ſhelving wood,
Wind our uncertain way. Let fancy lead,
And be it ours to follow, and admire,
As well we may, the graces infinite
Of nature. Lay aſide the ſweet reſource
That winter needs, and may at will obtain,

Of

Of authors chaſte and good, and let us read
The living page, whoſe ev'ry character
Delights and gives us wiſdom. Not a tree,
A plant, a leaf, a bloſſom, but contains
A folio volume. We may read and read
And read again, and ſtill find ſomething new,
Something to pleaſe, and ſomething to inſtruct,
E'en in the noiſome weed. See, ere we paſs
Alcanor's threſhold, to the curious eye
A little monitor preſents her page
Of choice inſtruction, with her ſnowy bells
The lily of the vale. She nor affects
The public walk, nor gaze of mid-day ſun:
She to no ſtate or dignity aſpires,
But ſilent and alone puts on her ſuit,
And ſheds her laſting perfume, but for which
We had not known there was a thing ſo ſweet
Hid in the gloomy ſhade. So when the blaſt
Her ſiſter tribes confounds, and to the earth

Stoops their high heads that vainly were expos'd,
She feels it not, but flouriſhes anew,
Still ſhelter'd and ſecure. And ſo the ſtorm
That makes the high elm couch, and rends the oak,
The humble lily ſpares. A thouſand blows
That ſhake the lofty monarch on his throne,
We leſſer folks feel not. Keen are the pains
Advancement often brings. To be ſecure,
Be humble; to be happy, be content.
'Tis not all gold, Eliza, that the eye
Delights in. To command a coach and ſix,
Be hight *my Lady*, or *your Grace*, to lead
In faſhion, ſhine at court, be cloth'd in ſilk,
And make an artificial day, thick-ſet
With eye-diſtracting jewels, are but chains
That lift you from the crowd, to be the mock
Of hiſſing envy; ſteps they are, that lead
Unwary maids to fortune's pillory,
To be the butt of undeſerv'd reproach

And

And lying ſlander. Have you not obſerv'd
The idle ſchool-boy, through a field of wheat
Scarce ripe, returning home, with what delight
He trims a ſwitch, and ſtrikes at the full ear
Moſt eminent, and ſtill walks on and ſtrikes?
So Fortune ſports with you, ye great, and ſtill
As one above another climbs, condemns,
And makes him ſhorter by the head. Happy,
No doubt, Alcanor were, ſhould it ſo chance
An eddy ſeize him in the ſtream of life,
And whirl him to a throne, of all this iſle
Grand Metropolitan; but truſt me, Sir,
Nor Laud, nor Tillotſon would ſtoop again
To bear the golden weight. Only with him
Sweet peace abounds, and only he eſcapes
The poiſon'd ſhafts of obloquy and wrong,
Who hides his virtue in content; and like
This modeſt lily, wins our beſt regard
By ſeeking to avoid it. Virtue too

Will ever thus her lone retreat betray,
And, ſpite of privacy, be ſought and ſeen;
For ſhe has fragrance that delights the ſenſe
Of Men and Angels, yea, of God himſelf.—

But come, we loiter. Paſs unnotic'd by
The ſleepy crocus, and the ſtaring daiſy,
The courtier of the ſun. What ſee we there?
The love-ſick cowſlip, that her head inclines
To hide a bleeding heart. And here's the meek
And ſoft-eyed primroſe. Dandelion this,
A college youth that flaſhes for a day
All gold; anon he doffs his gaudy ſuit,
Touch'd by the magic hand of ſome grave Biſhop,
And all at once, by commutation ſtrange,
Becomes a Reverend Divine. How ſleek!
How full of grace! and in that globous wig
So nicely trim'd, unfathomable ſtores,
No doubt, of erudition moſt profound:

Each

Each hair is learned, and his awful phiz,
A well-drawn title-page, gives large account
Of matters ſtrangely complicate within.
Place the two doctors each by each, my friends.
Which is the better? ſay. I blame not you,
Ye powder'd periwigs, that hardly hide,
With gloſſy ſuit and well-fed paunch to boot,
The underſtanding lean and beggarly.
But let me tell you, in the pompous globe
That rounds the dandelion's head, is couch'd
Divinity moſt rare. I never paſs
But he inſtructs me with a ſtill diſcourſe,
That more perſuades than all the vacant noiſe
Of pulpit rhetoric; for vacant 'tis,
And vacant muſt it be, by vacant heads
Supported.

Leave we them to mend, and mark
The melancholy hyacinth, that weeps
All night, and never lifts an eye all day.

How gay this meadow—like a gameſome boy
New-cloth'd, his locks freſh comb'd and powder'd, he
All health and ſpirits. Scarce ſo many ſtars
Shine in the azure canopy of heav'n,
As king-cups here are ſcatter'd, interſpers'd
With ſilver daiſies.

See, the toiling ſwain
With many a ſturdy ſtroke cuts up at laſt
The tough and ſinewy furze. How hard he fought
To win the glory of the barren waſte.
For what more noble than the vernal furze
With golden baſkets hung? Approach it not,
For ev'ry bloſſom has a troop of ſwords
Drawn to defend it. 'Tis the treaſury
Of Fays and Fairies. Here they nightly meet,
Each with a burniſh'd king-cup in his hand,
And quaff the ſubtil ether. Here they dance
Or to the village chimes, or moody ſong
Of midnight Philomel. The ringlet ſee

Fantaſtically

Fantaſtically trod. There, Oberon
His gallant train leads out, the while his torch
The glow-worm lights and duſky night illumes.
And there they foot it featly round, and laugh.
The ſacred ſpot the ſuperſtitious ewe
Regards, and bites it not in reverence.
Anon the drowſy clock tolls One—the cock
His clarion ſounds—the dance breaks off—the lights
Are quench'd—the muſic huſh'd—they ſpeed away
Swifter than thought, and ſtill the break of day
Outrun, and chaſing midnight as ſhe flies
Purſue her round the globe. So Fancy weaves
Her flimſy web, while ſober reaſon ſits,
And ſmiling wonders at the puny work,
A net for her; then ſprings on eagle wing,
Conſtraint defies, and ſoars above the ſun.
Not always ſuch her flight. For croaking dames
And ſilly mothers oft conſpire to clip
Her infant wing, and feed her full with fears,
Till all her energy expires, and ſhe,

Caught in the ſnare of fancy, lives and quakes
Pris'ner for life. O thoughtleſs managers!

See where the ſky-blue periwinkle climbs
Up to the cottage eaves, and hides the loam
And dairy lattice with a thouſand eyes,
Pentagonally form'd, to mock the ſkill
Of proud geometers. See there the fern
Unclenching all her fingers, to diſtract
The plodding theoriſt, who little ſees,
And tortures reaſon for the reſt. Behold,
And truſt him not, the ſeed. So idle boys
Delight in bubbles. So rank errors live,
Truth dies, and ev'ry day we need a Brown
To ſet a jangling world to rights.

No more:
But mark with how peculiar grace, yon wood
That clothes the weary ſteep, waves in the breeze
Her ſea of leaves; thither we turn our ſteps,

And

And by the way attend the chearful ſound
Of woodland harmony that always fills
The merry vale between. How ſweet the ſong
Day's harbinger attunes! I have not heard
Such elegant diviſions drawn from art.
And what is he that wins our admiration?
A little ſpeck that floats upon the ſun-beam.
What vaſt perfection cannot nature crowd
Into a puny point! The nightingale,
Her ſolo anthem ſung, and all that heard
Content, joins in the chorus of the day.
She, gentle heart, thinks it no pain to pleaſe,
Nor, like the moody ſongſters of the world,
Juſt ſhews her talent, pleaſes, takes affront,
And locks it up in envy.

Now we hear
The golden wood-pecker, that like the fool
Laughs loud at nothing. Now the reſtleſs pye,
So pert and garrulous. A goſſip ſhe,

And

And ſhe has been to town to learn the news.
O you ſhall hear her tell, how being hid
In goody Grabſon's beans, ſhe overheard
The tattling dames relate, 'Lord, what d'ye think!
'The Parſon's to be married—Betty Bounce
'Will ſoon be brought to-bed—the 'Squire is ſick—
'Julia has parted with her maid—they ſay
'Eliza paints, and Iſabel 's a ſhrew—
'More taxes yet—the miniſter's a fool—
'Corn will be cheap—what ſhall we farmers do?—
'My lady Bountiful has had a fit—
'Ay, let her die—they ſay ſhe means to leave
'A fortune to the poor—good reſt to her ſoul—
'She is no better than ſhe ſhould be—that
'Twixt you and I—.' And ſo from morn to night
Your ſcandal-monger prates, and tells you all
The ſecret ſprings that actuate the ſtate,
The miniſter, the people. She can ſee,
With half an eye, who ſtands, who falls, who riſes;
Who little merits, and who beſt deſerves,

And

And ſo ſhe murders truth, and propagates
The publick lie, extorting many a tear
And many a ſigh from wounded innocence.
O, Iſabel, if ev'ry idle word
Have weight in heav'n, what deed ſo rarely good
Can turn the ſcale in favour of that fool,
Who prattles injury, and worth defames,
From gay fifteen to tremulous fourſcore!

Hark, how the cuckoo mocks the village bells,
The jay attend, a very termagant
That ſcolds all day. Yes, ſhe has wedded been
A full three weeks, and would be maid again.

Obſerve the gloſſy raven in the graſs
Making rude courtſhip to his negro mate,
O he's a flatterer, and in his ſong,
If ſuch it may be call'd, her charms recites,
He tells her of her boſom black as jet,
Her taper leg, her penetrating eye,

Her

Her length of beak, her ſoft and ſilky wing,
Her voice ſo tunable; then waddles round,
Begins again, and hopes ſhe will be kind.
But all in vain. Alarm'd, he claps his wing
And flies; ſhe much againſt her will purſues.

I love to ſee the little goldfinch pluck
The groundſil's feather'd ſeed, and twit and twit;
And then in bow'r of apple bloſſoms perch'd,
Trim his gay ſuit, and pay us with a ſong.
I would not hold him pris'ner for the world.

The chimney-haunting ſwallow too, my eye
And ear well pleaſes. I delight to ſee
How ſuddenly he ſkims the glaſſy pool,
How quaintly dips, and with a bullet's ſpeed
Whiſks by. I love to be awake, and hear
His morning ſong twitter'd to young-eyed day.

But moſt of all it wins my admiration,
To view the ſtructure of this little work,

A bird's

A bird's neſt. Mark it well, within, without.
No tool, had he that wrought, no knife to cut,
No nail to fix, no bodkin to inſert,
No glue to join; his little beak was all.
And yet how neatly finiſh'd. What nice hand
With ev'ry implement and means of art,
And twenty years apprenticeſhip to boot,
Could make me ſuch another? Fondly then
We boaſt of excellence, whoſe nobleſt ſkill
Inſtinctive genius foils.

The bee obſerve;
She too an artiſt is, and laughs at man
Who calls on rules the ſightly hexagon
With truth to form; a cunning architect,
That at the roof begins her golden work,
And builds without foundation. How ſhe toils,
And ſtill from bud to bud, from flow'r to flow'r,
Travels the livelong day. Ye idle drones,
That rather pilfer than your bread obtain

By

By honeſt means like theſe, look here, and learn
How good, how fair, how honourable 'tis
To live by induſtry. The buſy tribes
Of bees ſo emulous, are daily fed
With heaven's peculiar manna. 'Tis for them,
Unwearied alchymiſts, the blooming world
Nectarious gold diſtils. And bounteous heav'n,
Still to the diligent and active good,
Their very labour makes the certain cauſe
Of future wealth. The little traveller
That toils ſo chearfully from flow'r to flow'r,
For ever ſinging as ſhe goes, herſelf
Bears on her wings and thighs the genial duſt
The barren bloſſom needs, and the young ſeed
Impregnates for herſelf, elſe unprolific.
I cannot love thy art, hard-hearted man,
That teaches to depopulate the hive,
And with the death of thouſands win unhurt
The precious treaſures induſtry had earn'd.
O burglary, how baſe, and back'd withal

With murder! But what links of law can bind
Imperious appetite, a haughty ſteed,
That having rang'd his paſture free as air,
Diſdains the bit, and mounted once again,
Runs madly on, high overleaps all bounds,
And flings his rider to an early grave.

How peaceable and ſolemn a retreat
This wood affords. I love to quit the glare
Of ſultry day for ſhadows cool as theſe.
The ſober twilight of this winding way,
Lets fall a ſerious gloom upon the mind
That checks, but not appals. Such are the haunts
Religion loves, a meek and humble maid
Whoſe tender eye bears not the blaze of day.
And here with Meditation hand in hand
She walks, and feels her often wounded heart
Renew'd and heal'd. Speak ſoftly, we intrude.
A whiſper is too loud for ſolitude
So mute and ſtill.

So have I gone at night,
When the faint eye of day was hardly clos'd,
And turn'd the grating key that kept the door
Of church or chapel, to enjoy alone
The mournful horrors that impending night
And painted windows ſhed, along the dark
And ſcarce to be diſtinguiſh'd aiſle. My foot
Has ſtood and paus'd, half ſtartled at the ſound
Of it's own tip-toe pace. I've held my breath,
And been offended that my nimble heart
Should throb ſo audibly. I would not hear
Aught elſe diſturb the ſilent reign of death,
Save the dull ticking of a reſtleſs clock.
That calls me home, and leads the thoughtful ſoul
Through mazes of reflection, till ſhe feels
For what and whom ſhe lives. Ye timid fair,
I never ſaw the ſheeted ghoſt ſteal by,
I never heard th' unpriſon'd dead complain
And gibber in my ear, though I have lov'd
The yawning time of night, and travel'd round

And round again the manſions of the dead.
Yet I have heard, what fancy well might deem
Sufficient proof of both, the prowling owl
Sweep by, and with a hideous ſhriek awake
The church-yard echo, and I too have ſtood
Harrow'd and ſpeechleſs at the diſmal ſound.
But here ſhe frights us not. Such ſcenes as theſe
No ghoſt frequents. If any ſpirits here,
They are as gentle as the eve of day,
And only come to turn our wand'ring ſteps
From lurking danger. With what eaſy grace
This footway winds about. Shew me deſigns
That pleaſe us more. What ſtrict geometer
Can carve his yew, his quickſet, or his box,
To half its elegance? I would not ſee
A thouſand paces on, nor have my way
Too ſtrictly ſerpentine. If there be art,
Let it be hid in nature. Wind the path,
But be not bound to follow Hogarth's line.
I grant it beauty, but too often ſeen,

That beauty pleaſes not. I love to meet
A ſudden turn like this, that ſtops me ſhort,
Extravagantly devious, and invites
Or up the hill or down; then winds again,
By reeling drunkard trod, and all at once
Ends in a green-ſward waggon way, that like
Cathedral aiſle compleatly roof'd with branches,
Runs thro' the gloomy wood from top to bottom,
And has at either end a gothic door
Wide open. Yet we tarry not, nor tread
With hardly ſenſible advance the way
That mocks our toil; but having gaz'd awhile
At the ſtill view below, the living ſcene
Inimitable nature has hung up
At the vault's end, we diſappear again,
And follow ſtill the flexile path, conceal'd
In ſhady underwood. Nor ſometimes ſcorn
Under the high majeſtic oak to ſit,
And comment on his leaf, his branch, his arm
Paternally extended, his vaſt girth,

And ample hopp abovе. To him that loves
To walk with contemplation, ev'ry leaf
Affords a tale concluding with a moral.
The very hazel has a tongue to teach,
The birch, the maple, horn-beam, beech, and aſh.

But theſe detain us not, for the faint ſun
Puts on a milder countenance, and ſkirts
The undulated clouds that croſs his way
With glory viſible. His axle cools,
And his broad diſk, tho' fervent, not intenſe,
Foretells the near approach of matron night.
Ye fair, retreat! Your drooping flowers need
Wholeſome refreſhment. Down the hedge-row path
We haſten home, and only ſlack our ſpeed
To gaze a moment at the cuſtom'd gap,
That all ſo unexpectedly preſents
The clear cerulean proſpect down the vale.
Diſpers'd along the bottom flocks and herds,
Hayricks and cottages, beſide a ſtream

That ſilverly meanders here and there;
And higher up, corn-fields, and paſtures, hops,
And waving woods, and tufts, and lonely oaks,
Thick interſpers'd as Nature beſt was pleas'd.
I could not paſs this view, nor ſtay to feaſt,
For all the wealth of Ind. Ingenious painter,
Why leave a land ſo delicately cloth'd
To gather beauties on a foreign ſhore?
'Twas here my Shakeſpear caught his living art,
And who can paint like him? To Britiſh eyes
Shew Britiſh beauties. Who can chooſe but love?
Paint me the fair ones of my native iſle;
Your canvaſs ſhall have charms no time can kill.
The foreign belle, though fair, attracts me not.

Another moment pauſe, and to the vale
Look back from the calm height we tread. See where
The gameſome ſchool-boys, once again diſmiſs'd,
Feel all the ſweets of liberty, and drive
The ſpeedy hours away at the briſk game

Of

Of ſocial cricket. It delights me much
To ſee them run, and hear the chearful ſhout
Sent up for victory—I cannot tell
What rare effect the mingled ſound may yield,
Of huntſmen, hounds, and horns, to the firm heart,
That never feels a pain for flying puſs;
To me it gives a pleaſure far more ſweet,
To hear the cry of infant jubilee
Exulting thus. Here all is innocent,
And free from pain, which the reſounding chaſe,
With all its ſturdy clamours cannot drown,
E'en tho' it pour along a thund'ring peal,
Strong as the deep artillery of heav'n.

Now turn, and from the pleaſant ſummit view
Alcanor's cell. Before, the garden ſee
So trim and ſpruce; behind, the vaſt domain
Of cow and truant poney, that approves
All paſtures but his own. Seen thro' the trees,

It ſeems, methinks, a parti-colour'd ſpot
Upon a ſampler little Miſs has work'd
To pleaſe her grandam. Love it ſtill, ye fair,
Enjoy it ſtill, Alcanor. Here who will
May feel a ſatisfaction truly ſweet,
That York or Lambeth cannot give. Who ſtrays,
Shall taſte a thouſand pains unfelt at home.
We fondly think the land of happineſs
Is any where but here. And ſo we quit
The little bliſs we own for leſs, and learn
From painful circumſtance, the more we ſtray,
The more we want relief. The troubled heart
That harbours diſcontent, feeds a diſeaſe
No change of place, no medicine can cure,
Happy the man who truly loves his home,
And never wanders farther from his door
Than we have gone to-day; who feels his heart
Still drawing homeward, and delights like us
Once more to reſt his foot on his own threſhold.

Alcanor,

Alcanor, Julia, Iſabel, Eliza,
Here let us pauſe, and ere ſtill night advance
To ſhut the books of heav'n, look back and ſee
What commendable act has ſprung to-day.
Ah! who can boaſt? The little good we do
In all the years of life will ſcarce outweigh
The follies of an hour. Let this ſuffice,
We had a heart that was inclin'd to do,
Much better than we did.

Adieu, ye fair,
We leave you to your taſk, nor give you aid
As wont. Rear'd by your hands alone, the flow'r
Shall have a ruddier bluſh, a ſweeter fragrance.
Alcanor come, and let us once again
Deſcend into the valley, and enjoy
The ſober peace of the ſtill ſummer's eve.
We have no bluſh to loſe; our freckled cheek
The ſun not bliſters, nor the night-dew blaſts.
Such is the time the muſing poet loves.

Now vigorous imagination teems,
And, warm with meditation, brings to birth
Her admirable thought. I love to hear
The ſilent rook to the high wood make way
With hiſſing wing; to mark the wanton mouſe,
And ſee him gambol round the primroſe head,
'Till the ſtill owl comes ſmoothly ſailing by,
And with a ſhrill *to-whit* breaks off his dance,
And ſends him ſcouring home; to hear the cur
Of the night-loving partridge, or the ſwell
Of the deep curfew from afar. And now
It pleaſes me to mark the hooting owl,
Perch'd on the naked hop-pole, to attend
The diſtant cataract, or farmer's cur
That bays the northern lights or riſing moon.
Then let me ſteal along the woody lane,
To hear thy ſong ſo various, gentle bird,
The queen of night, tranſporting Philomel;
I name thee not to give my feeble lines
A grace elſe wanted, for I love thy ſong.

And

And often have I ſtood to hear thee ſing,
When the clear moon, with Cytherean ſmile,
Emerging from an eaſtern cloud, has ſhot
A look of pure benevolence and joy
Into the heart of night. Yes, I have ſtood
And mark'd thy varied note, and frequent pauſe,
Thy briſk and melancholy mood, with heart
Sincerely pleas'd. And, Oh! methought, no note
Can equal thine, ſweet bird, of all that ſing,
How eaſily the chief! Yet have I heard
What pleaſes me ſtill more: the human voice
In ſerious ſweetneſs flowing from the heart
Of unaffected woman. I could hark
Till the round world diſſolv'd, to the pure ſtrain
Love teaches, gently Modeſty inſpires.
But teaze me not, ye ſelf-conceited fools,
Who with a loud, inſufferable ſquall
Inſult our ears, or hum a noiſeleſs tune
Diſdaining to be heard; the while ye grin,
To ſhew a ſet of teeth newly repair'd,

Or

Or ſhrink and ſhrug, to make the crowd admire:
Your ſtrange grimaces practis'd at the glaſs.
O! I abhor it. I had rather hear
A pedlar's kit beſcrape a dancing dog.

Melodious bird, good night; good night Alcanor.
Let us not treſpaſs on the hours of reſt,
For we muſt ſteal from morning to repay them.
And who would loſe the animated ſmile
Of dawning day, for th' auſtere frown of night?
I grant her well accoutred in her ſuit
Of dripping ſable, powder'd thick with ſtars,
And much applaud her as ſhe paſſes by
With a repleniſh'd horn on either brow;
But more I love to ſee awaking day
Riſe with a fluſter'd cheek; a careful maid
That fears ſhe has outſlept the 'cuſtom'd hour,
And leaves her chamber bluſhing. Hence to reſt;
I will not prattle longer to detain you
Under the dewy canopy of night.

So

So have I ſung Alcanor and the fair,
Thro' the ſlow walk and long beloiter'd day
Of early ſummer. Let him read that will;
And blame me not, if in an afternoon
I hardly ſtray a ſingle mile from home.
It is my humour. Let him ſpeed that will,
And fly like cannon-ſhot from poſt to poſt;
I love to ſtop, and quit the public road,
To gain a ſummit, take a view, or pluck
An unknown bloſſom. What if I diſmount,
And leave my ſteed to graze the while I ſit
Under the pleaſant lee, or idly roam
Athwart the paſture, diligent to mark
What paſſes next? 'Tis Engliſh blood that flows
Under the azure covert of theſe veins.
I love my liberty; and if I ſing,
Will ſing to pleaſe myſelf, bound by no rule,
The ſubject of no law.—I cannot think
The path of excellence is only hit
By ſervile imitation. In a path
Peculiarly his own great Handel went,

And

And juſtly merits our applauſe, tho' not
The Homer of his art. In a new path
Went Shakeſpear, nobly launching forth,
And who ſhall ſay he has not found perfection,
Tho' not a Sophocles. Ye ſhallow wits,
Who bid us coaſt it in the learned track,
Nor quit the ſight of ſhore, there is in art
A world unknown, whoſe treaſures only he
Shall ſpy, and well deſerve, who proudly ſcorns
The wither'd laurel, and exulting ſteers
Far from the cuſtom'd way. My ſlender bark
Perchance has ruſh'd into a boiſt'rous ſea
That ſoon ſhall overwhelm her: yet I fear
No ſtorms the furious elements can rouſe,
And if I fail, ſhall deem it noble ſtill
To founder in a brave attempt. Once more
The cheerful breeze ſets fair; we fill our ſail
And ſcud before it. When the critic ſtarts,
And angrily unties his bags of wind,
Then we lay to, and let the blaſt go by.

AT

AT once we ruſh into the heart of June,
And find Alcanor at the noon of day
Laborious in his garden. The warm ſun
Is clouded, and the fluctuating breeze
Calls him from nicer labour, to attend
The vegetable progreſs. Mark we now
A thouſand great effects that ſpring from toil,
Unſung before. The martial pea obſerve,
In ſquare battalion rang'd, line after line
Succeſſive; the gay bean, her hindmoſt ranks
Stript of their bloſſoms; the thick-ſcatter'd bed
Of ſoporific lettuce; the green hill
Cover'd with cucumbers. All theſe and more,
As carrots, parſnips, onions, cabbages,
Potatoes, turnips, radiſhes, my Muſe
Diſdains not. She can ſtray well-pleas'd, and pluck

The

The od'rous leaf of marj'ram, baum, or mint;
Then ſmile to think how near the neighbourhood
Of rue and wormwood, in her thoughtful eye
Reſembling life, that ever thus brings forth
In quick ſucceſſion bitter things and ſweet.
Nor ſcorns ſhe to obſerve the thriving ſage,
That well becomes the garden of a clerk;
The wholeſome camomile, and fragrant thyme.
All theſe thy pains, Alcanor, propagate,
Support, and feed. Let the fat Doctor laugh,
Who only toils to ſatisfy the calls
Of appetite inſatiate, and retires,
Good honeſt ſoul, offended at the world,
Of pure devotion, to his pipe and pot,
And whiffs and ſleeps his idle hours away.
O! let him laugh. A life of labour yields
Sweeter enjoyment than his gouty limbs
Have ſenſe to feel. It gives the body health,
Agility, and ſtrength, and makes it proof
Againſt the fang of pain. It ſtops the courſe

Of

Of prodigal contagion, ſcares away
The ſcythe of time, and turns the dart of death.
And hence the mind unwonted force derives;
Recruited oft by labour, to her work
Strong as a giant ſhe returns, and rolls
Her Siſyphæan ball with wond'rous eaſe
Up to the mountain's top. O 'tis the ſoul
Of poeſy and wit! Then follow ſtill,
The happy taſk, nor ſcorn to feel, Alcanor,
How paſſing grateful 'tis to reap the fruits
Of willing toil. The board of induſtry,
By her own labour frugally ſupplied,
Gives to her food an admirable zeſt,
Unknown to indolence, that half aſleep
With palateleſs indifference ſurveys
The ſmoking feaſt of plenty.

I have ſtray'd
Wild as the mountain bee, and cull'd a ſweet
From ev'ry flow'r that beautified my way.

Ah!

Ah! how could I forget thy charms ſo long,
Surpaſſing Dorothy, the ſweeteſt thing
Theſe bitter times afford. O let me ſeek
Thee faireſt, fouleſt of the human race,
And ſing thy beauties, like the ſtingleſs drone,
That, driven from the hive, a refuge ſeeks
In the dank ſewer or fane of Cloacin!
See where ſhe goes with vaſt becoming ſtrides,
And man-like majeſty, ſwinging her arms,
Alternate pendulums, that heavily
Move to and fro, as I have ſeen in towns
The handles of a pump. Who would not love?
Celeſtial maid, my charming non-pareil,
Turn to the ſupplicating voice that wooes,
And ſhed one ſweet and ſoul-reviving ſmile
Upon a captive poet. Let me ſee
Yet once again the formidable row,
From ear to ear, of never-cleanſed teeth
In ſaffron uniform. O let me ſee
Thy broad hyſteric grin, thy ſhining face,

And

And greaſy locks, nor ever follow thus
Unheard, thy ſlip-ſhod and undarned heel.
Come, let me place thee by the flaunting belle
That trips it lightly to the city ball.
Stay, airy madam, why ſo haſty? ſtay,
And learn who beſt deſerves, or thou, or ſhe.
Is Dorothy uncleanly? ſo art thou.
Her teeth are all her own, thine falſe and borrow'd.
And ſhould ſhe to a meagre dentiſt pawn
The comely row, 'tis ten to one thy lips
Receive them next. O filthy uſurpation!
Who dares approach the lips of Dorothy,
Shall find no doubt a healthful breath behind.
Who thee ſalutes, by that fair mouth induc'd,
Shall be aſtounded at the fœtid ſtench
That iſſues from it. Health and youth are fled,
And all their odors gone, ſeduc'd away
By late debauch. Say, is that cheek thine own,
Or borrow'd from the pencil? Has no art
Been buſy there to make the roſe revive?

Is all that fairneſs thine? No, ſqualid wretch,
Thy hue is hateful:—But for thy perfumes,
And the kind aid of paint and ſweet pomade,
We could not live within a thouſand leagues
Of ſuch a fearful peſt. The ſhining face
Of graceleſs Dorothy, tho' far, far ſhort
Of what we deem moſt fair and worthy touch,
Outdoes thy plaiſter'd cheek, as much as ſhe
May be herſelf outdone. Thoſe greaſy locks,
That hang in ropes from her once-whiter cap,
Grew on the head they grace. But where grew thine?
Bought of ſome louſy wench that would have bread
Nor be at pains to earn it, or purloin'd
At midnight hour from a new-buried corpſe.
In rags is Dorothy, in ſilk art thou;
But ſhe in rags is honeſt; knaviſh, lewd,
And diſcontent art thou, tho' clad in ſilk.
Change dreſs, and who excels? Or ſearch the mind,
And ſee who triumphs there? It may be thine
To ſpeak a dialect to her unknown,

To

To liſp in terms of faſhion, and retail
A few mean ſcraps of French; but, truſt me, ſhe
Her native language underſtands as well,
Leſs taught. She too can boaſt a ſtore as large
Of uſeful knowledge, for ye both have none.
But ignorance in her was the hard lot
Of ſtrict neceſſity:—She could not buy
Golden improvement, for ſhe finds the day
Scarce equal to her toil, tho' all ſhe aſks
Be bread. In you diſtaſte and idleneſs,
Money and time ill-ſpent, were all the cauſe.
Thy care was only to be gay without,
And beggarly within. For what know you
Of Virtue, or Religion, or aught elſe
Deſerving praiſe? You write, perhaps, and read:
To what good purpoſe? To corrupt the ſoul,
And give it back to him who gave it you,
So ſpotted, as to make his angels bluſh,
And cauſe the Deity himſelf to turn
And hide his countenance. O blame not time!

The mind that thirſts no obſtacle can thwart.
It has a thouſand ſhifts to ſink the mine
And purify its gold. You may be ſtiff,
And look on Dolly with diſdainful eye,
But ſhe's your equal here, and you muſt ſtand
Much after her in heav'n.

Is there a man
For wiſdom eminent? ſeek him betimes.
He will not ſhun thee, though thy frequent foot
Wear out the pavement at his door. Ye fair,
Be ſedulous to win the man of ſenſe;
And fly the empty fool. Shame the dull boy
Who leaves at college what he learnt at ſchool,
And whips his academic hours away,
Cas'd in unwrinkled buck-ſkin and tight boots,
More ſtudious of his hunter than his books.
O! had ye ſenſe to ſee what powder'd apes
Ye oft admire, the idle boy for ſhame
Would lay his racket and his maſt aſide,

And love his tutor and his deſk. Time was
When ev'ry woman was a judge of arms
And military exploit: 'twas an age
Of admirable heroes. And time was
When women dealt in Hebrew, Latin, Greek;
No dunces then, but all were deeply learn'd.
I do not wiſh to ſee the female eye
Waſte all its luſtre at the midnight lamp;
I do not wiſh to ſee the female cheek
Grow pale with application. Let their care
Be to preſerve their beauty; that ſecur'd,
Improve the judgment, that the loving fair
May have an eye to know the man of worth,
And keep ſecure the jewel of her charms
From him that ill deſerves. Let the ſpruce beau,
That lean, ſweet-ſcented, and palav'rous fool,
Who talks of honour and his ſword, and plucks
The man that dares adviſe him by the noſe;
That puny thing that hardly crawls about,
Reduc'd by wine and women, yet drinks on,

And vapours loudly o'er his glaſs, reſolv'd
To tell a tale of nothing, and outſwear
The northern tempeſt; let that fool, I ſay,
Look for a wife in vain, and live deſpis'd.

I would that all the fair ones of this iſle
Were ſuch as one I knew. Peace to her ſoul,
She lives no more. And I a genius need
To paint her as ſhe was. Moſt like, methinks,
That amiable maid the poet drew,
Stealing a glance from heav'n, and call'd her Portia.
Happy the man, and happy ſure he was,
So wedded. Bleſt with her, he wander'd not
To ſeek for happineſs; 'twas his at home.
How often have I paus'd, and chain'd my tongue,
To hear the muſic of her ſober words!
How often have I wonder'd at the grace
Inſtruction borrow'd from her eye and cheek!
Surely that maid is worth a nation's gold,
Who has ſuch rich reſources in herſelf

For

From them ſhe rears. A mother well inform'd
Entails a bleſſing on her infant charge
Better than riches; an unfailing cruſe
She leaves behind her, which the faſter flows
The more 'tis drawn; where ev'ry ſoul may feed,
And nought diminiſh of the public ſtock.

Shew me a maid ſo fair in all your ranks,
Ye crowded boarding-ſchools. Are ye not apt
To taint the infant mind, to point the way
To faſhionable folly, ſtrew with flow'rs
The path of vice, and teach the wayward child
Extravagance and pride? Who learns in you
To be the prudent wife, the pious mother?
To be her parents' ſtaff, or huſband's joy?
'Tis you diſſolve the links that once held faſt
Domeſtic happineſs. 'Tis you untie
The matrimonial knot; 'tis you divide
The parent and his child. O! 'tis to you
We owe the ruin of our deareſt bliſs.

The beſt inſtructor for the growing laſs
Is ſhe that bare her. Let *her* firſt be taught,
And we ſhall ſee the path of virtue ſmooth
With often treading. She can beſt diſpenſe
That frequent medicine the ſoul requires,
And make it grateful to the tongue of youth,
By mixture of affection. She can charm
When others fail, and leave the work undone.
She will not faint, for ſhe inſtructs her own.
She will not torture, for ſhe feels herſelf.
So education thrives, and the ſweet maid
Improves in beauty, like the ſhapeleſs rock
Under the ſculptor's chiſel, till at length
She undertakes her progreſs thro' the world,
A woman fair and good, as child for parent,
Parent for child, or man for wife could wiſh.
Say, man, what more delights thee than the fair?
What ſhould we not be patient to endure
If they command? We rule the noiſy world,
But they rule us. Then teach them how to guide,

And

And hold the rein with judgment. Their applauſe
May once again reſtore the quiet reign
Of virtue, love, and peace, and yet bring back
The bluſh of folly, and the ſhame of vice.

I ride without a rein, and thence it is
My ambling Pegaſus oft turns aſide,
And quits the publick way for the cool lane,
Or bears me to the door of many a fool
I had not elſe obſerv'd. No wonder then
I rap ſo loudly at your gilded doors,
Ye female guides, that lead our lambs aſtray;
And bid you be at home, ye thoughtleſs dames,
Who truſt your offspring with the hungry wolf.
Once more I turn, and once again obſerve
Alcanor in his garden; not alone,
For Iſabel is there. The day declines,
And now the falling ſun offends them not.
She rears the fainting flow'r, and feeds its root.
Ye botaniſts, I cannot talk like you,

And

And give to ev'ry flow'r its name and rank,
Taught by Linnæus; yet I find in all
Or known or unknown, in the garden rais'd,
Or nurtur'd in the hedge-row, or the field,
A ſecret virtue, that attracts my eye
And meliorates my heart. And much I love
To ſee the fair one bind the ſtraggling pink,
Cheer the ſweet roſe, the lupin, and the ſtock,
And lend a ſtaff to the ſtill gadding pea.
I cannot count the number of the ſtars,
Nor call them by their names, much leſs relate
What vegetable tribes Alcanor loves,
The fair ones rear. I will not ſwell my ſong
With the proud liſt of forces led from Greece,
Or angels tumbled headlong into hell.
Yet let me praiſe the garden-loving maid,
Who innocently thus concludes the day.
Ye fair, it well becomes you. Better thus
Cheat time away, than at the crowded rout,
Ruſtling in ſilk, in a ſmall room, cloſe-pent,

And

And heated e'en to fuſion; made to breathe
A rank contagious air, and fret at whiſt,
Or ſit aſide to ſneer and whiſper ſcandal.

In ſuch a ſilent, cool, and wholeſome hour,
The Author of the world came down from Heav'n
To walk in Paradiſe, well pleas'd to mark
The harmleſs deeds of new-created man.
And ſure the ſilent, cool, and wholeſome hour
May ſtill delight him, our atonement made.
Who knows but as we walk he walks unſeen,
And ſees, and well approves the cheerful taſk
The fair one loves; he breathes upon the pink
And gives it odor, touches the ſweet roſe
And makes it glow, beckons the ev'ning dew
And ſheds it on the lupin and the pea:
Then ſmiles on her, and covers all her cheek
With gay good humour, happineſs, and health.
So all are paſſing ſweet, and the young Eve
Feels all her pains rewarded, all her joys

Perfect and unimpair'd. But who can love,
Of heav'nly temper, to frequent your walks,
Ye faſhion-loving belles. The human ſoul
Your peſtilent amuſements hates; how then
Shall he approve, who cannot look on guilt?

So day by day Alcanor and the fair
Attend the garden ſtudious, ſoon as eve
Her cooling odors ſheds, and the large ſun
Grows dim, and ſhoots his mellow rays oblique.

Nor theſe the only pleaſures ſummer yields.
They often wander at the cloſe of day
Along the ſhady lane, or thro' the wood,
To pluck the ruddy ſtrawberry, or ſmell
The perfum'd breeze that all the fragrance ſteals
Of honey-ſuckle, bloſſom'd beans, or clover;
Or haply rifles from the new-made rick
The hay's ſweet odor, or the ſweeter breath
Of farmer's yard, where the ſtill patient cow

Stands

Stands o'er the plenteous milk-pail ruminant.
Sometimes they ſtray at higheſt noon, when day
His gariſh eye has veil'd, and idly range
The new-mown paſture, mark the diſtant forge
Deep in the valley, jutting its low roof
Againſt the ſtream, cloſe by the trickling floodgate,
And thither turn their ſteps. I love to ſee
How hardly ſome their frugal morſel earn;
It gives my own a zeſt, and ſerves to damp
The longing appetite of diſcontent.

See, pale and hollow-eyed, in his blue ſhirt,
Before the ſcorching furnace, reeking ſtands
The weary ſmith. A thund'ring water-wheel
Alternately uplifts his pond'rous pair
Of roaring bellows. He torments the coal
And ſtirs the melting ore, till all reſolv'd
Into a perfect lump; then ſeizes faſt
With his ſtrong forceps the unwieldy maſs,

And

And drags it glowing to the anvil. Eye
Can ſcarce attend it, ſo intenſe the heat.
He bears it all, and with one arm lets looſe
Th' impatient ſtream. The heavy wheel moves round,
And ever and again lets fall the loud
And awful hammer, that confounds the ear,
And makes the firm earth ſhake. He turns the maſs,
And works it into ſhape; till cooler grown,
He ſtops his wheel, and once again provokes
The dying cinders, and his half-done work
Buries in fire. Again he drags it forth,
And once more lifts it to the ſturdy anvil.
There beaten long, and often turn'd, at length
'Tis done. He bears it hiſſing to the light,
An iron bar. Behold it well. What is't,
But a juſt emblem of the lot of virtue.
For in this naughty world ſhe cannot live,
Nor ruſt contract, nor mingle with alloy.
So the great Judge, to make her worthy heav'n,

Submits

Submits her to the furnace and the anvil;
'Till molten, bruis'd, and batter'd, ſhe becomes
Spotleſs and pure, and leaves her droſs behind.

And who ſhall grieve, and think his lot ſevere
Who well conſiders this? The ſlaving ſmith,
That wipes his flowing brow ſo faſt, his bread
Earns at the bitter coſt, expence of health.
In ſummer's hotteſt day he feeds his forge,
And ſtands expos'd to the diſtreſsful fire
That almoſt broils him dead. Yet what complaint
Makes he at fortune? He is well content
To toil at his infernal work, and breathe
A torrid atmoſphere, ſo he may earn
A ſcant ſubſiſtence in this pinching world.
Ye idle rich, conſider this, nor aim
At places, penſions, titles, coronets.
Ye lazy clerks, conſider this, nor ſue
For benefices, canonries, and mitres.
All might inherit eaſe, would they not long

To fill a braver office, and at times
Look down, and ſee how hard the drudging poor
Toils for a bare ſubſiſtence. Be content,
And happineſs ſhall turn and follow you.
But ſhe is coy as the unwedded maid,
And he that follows her is vext in vain,
And may purſue for ever. Let her fly;
Shy fool, I follow not. If thou relent,
Feaſt at my board, and be a welcome gueſt.

So Summer glides along, and happy he
Who like Alcanor holds occaſion faſt,
And, duty done, enjoys the ſummer lounge.

So have I wander'd ere thoſe days were paſt
That childhood calls her own. Ah! happy days
That recollection loves, unſtain'd with vice,
Why were ye gone ſo ſoon? Did I not love
To quit my deſk and ramble in the field,
To gather auſtere berries from the buſh,

Or

Or ſearch the coppice for the cluſt'ring nut?
Did I not always with a ſhout applaud,
That welcome voice the holiday announc'd?
Say, you that knew me, you that ſaw me oft
Shut up my book elate, and dance for joy.
O liberty! how paſſing ſweet art thou
To him that labours at the conſtant oar
Sorely reluctant, to the pining boy
That loves enlargement, and abhors his chain.

So on thy banks too, Iſis, have I ſtray'd,
A taſſel'd ſtudent. Witneſs you that ſhar'd
My morning walk, my ramble at high noon,
My evening voyage, an unſkilful tar,
To Godſtow bound, or ſome inferior port,
For ſtrawberries and cream. What have we found
In life's auſterer hours, delectable
As the long day ſo loiter'd? O ye grave
And ſerious heads, who guard the twin retreats
Of Britiſh learning, give the honeſt boy

His due indulgence. Let him range the field,
Frequent the publick walk, and ſtoutly tug
The ever-yielding oar. But mark him well,
And if he turn aſide to vice or folly,
Shew him the rod, and let him feel you prize
The parent's happineſs, the public good.
And you, ye thoughtleſs young, deem it not hard
If old experience check your wild career,
And call you home to think. Love the kind hand
That ſteadily corrects, and be not apt
To leave the ſtudent's for the jockey's part,
To dreſs, to ſwear, to gamble, whore, and drink.
For ſo the taylor, gameſter, rogue, and punk,
The cook, the ſurgeon, and the vintner thrive,
Learning decays, and the book-vender ſtarves;
Save only he that reading circulates,
And earns a living of the ſmarting boy,
Who all day long lies writhing on his couch
Repentant, feeding his diſtemper'd mind
With plays and novels. Will ye thus repay

Parental goodneſs? Will ye thus apply
Parental bounty? Who can wonder then,
The parent's curſe on Alma-mater lights,
And the wide world re-echoes with the ſound
Of terrible reproach. For who can live
And not condemn, who ſees the ſwagg'ring dunce,
The knave, the drunkard, and the debauchee,
Mix with the ſacred band of God's apoſtles?

NOW comes July, and with his fervid noon
Unnerves the hand of toil. The mower ſteeps—
The ſun-burnt maid rakes feebly—the hot ſwain
Pitches his load reluctant—the faint ſteer,
Laſhing his ſides, draws ſulkily along
The ſlow encumber'd wain. The hedge-row now
Delights, or the ſtill ſhade of ſilent lane,

Or cool impending arbor, there to read,
Or talk and laugh, or meditate and ſleep.

There let me ſit to ſee the brewing ſtorm
Collect its duſky horrors, and advance
To bellow ſternly in the ear of night;
To ſee th' Almighty electrician come,
Making the clouds his chariot. Who can ſtand
When he appears? The conſcious creature flies,
And ſkulks away, afraid to ſee his God
Charge and recharge his dreadful battery.
For who ſo pure his lightning might not blaſt,
And be the meſſenger of juſtice? Who
Can ſtand expos'd, and to his judge exclaim,
'My heart is cleanſed, turn thy ſtorm away.'
Fear not, ye fair, who with the naughty world
Have ſeldom mingled. Mark the rolling ſtorm,
And let me hear you tell, when morning comes,
With what tremendous howl the furious blaſt
Blew the large ſhow'r in heavy cataract

Againſt your window; how the keen, the quick,
And vivid lightning quiver'd on your bed,
And how the deep artillery of heav'n
Broke looſe, and ſhook your coward habitation.
Fear not; for if a life of innocence,
And that which we deem virtue here below,
Can hold the forky bolt, ye may preſume
To look and live. Yet be not bold, but ſhew
Some pious dread, ſome grave aſtoniſhment.
For all our worthy deeds are nothing worth,
And if the ſolemn tempeſt cut us ſhort
In our beſt hour, we are in debt to heav'n.

So when the trumpet blew and waxing loud
And louder ſtill, became exceeding loud,
That all the people trembled, and the mount
Smok'd at the touch of God, and ſhook, a voice
Commanded prieſts and people to beware,
Not to break thro' and gaze, leſt the pure God,

Whoſe ſpotleſs nature cannot brook the ſight
Of aught unſanctified, break forth and ſlay.

The ſtorm ſubſided, and the day begun,
Who would not walk along the ſandy way,
To ſmell the ſhower's fragrance, ſee the ſun
With his ſheer eye aſcend the zenith joyous,
Mark the ſtill-rumbling cloud crowding away
Indignant, and embrace the gentle breeze,
That idly wantons with the dewy leaf,
And ſhakes the pearly rain-drop to the ground.
How ſweet the incenſe of reviving flow'rs!
Ye muſt abroad, ye fair. The angry night
Has done you miſchief. Ev'ry plant will need
Your kindly hand to rear its falling head.

Come not St. Swithin with a cloudy face,
Ill-ominous; for old tradition ſays,
If Swithin weep, a deluge will enſue,

A forty days of rain. The ſwain believes,
And bleſſes ſultry Swithin if he ſmiles,
But curſes if he frowns. So crazy dames
Teach the apt boy a thouſand ugly ſigns,
Which riper judgment cannot ſhake aſide.
And ſo the path of life is rough indeed,
And the poor boy feels double ſmart, compell'd
To trudge it barefoot on the naked flint.
For what is judgment and the mind inform'd,
Your chriſtian armour, goſpel-preparation,
But ſandals for the feet, that tread with eaſe,
Nor feel thoſe harſh aſperities of life,
Which ignorance and ſuperſtition dread.
I much admire we ever ſhould complain
That life is ſharp and painful, when ourſelves
Create the better half of all our woe.
Who can he blame who ſhudders at the ſight
Of his own candle, and foretels with grief
A winding ſheet? who ſtarts at the red coal
That bounces from his fire, and picks it up,

His hair on end, a coffin? ſpills his ſalt,
And dreads diſaſter? dreams of pleaſant fields,
And ſmells a corpſe? and ever ſhuns with care
The unpropitious hour to pare his nails?
Such fears but ill become a ſoul that thinks.
Let time bring forth what heavy plagues it will.
Who pain anticipates, that pain feels twice,
And often feels in vain. Yet, tho' I blame
The man who with too buſy eye unfolds
The page of time, and reads his lot amiſs,
I can applaud to ſee the ſmiling maid,
With pretty ſuperſtition pluck a roſe,
And lay it by till Chriſtmas. I can look
With much complacency on all her arts
To know the future huſband. Yes, ye fair,
I deem it good to ſteal from years to come
A ſhare of happineſs. We could not live,
Did we not hope to morrow would produce
A better lot than we enjoy to-day.
Hope is the deareſt med'cine of the ſoul,

A ſweet

A ſweet oblivious antidote, that heals
The better half of all the pains of life.

Now o'er his corn, the ſturdy farmer looks,
And ſwells with ſatisfaction, to behold
The plenteous harveſt that repays his toil.
We too are gratified, and feel a joy
Inferior but to his, partakers all
Of the rich bounty Providence has ſtrew'd
In plentiful profuſion o'er the field.
Tell me ye fair, Alcanor tell me, what
Is to the eye more cheerful, to the heart
More ſatisfactive, than to look abroad,
And from the window ſee the reaper ſtrip,
Look round, and put his ſickle to the wheat?
Or hear the early mower whet his ſcythe,
And ſee where he has cut his ſounding way,
E'en to the utmoſt edge of the brown field
Of oats or barley? What delights us more,
Than ſtudiouſly to trace the vaſt effects

Of ow ſoon the plenteous year has ſhed her fruits,
Hc nd waits the ſlow approach of ſurly Winter.
H

I) One labour more the cheerful hand awaits;
Then the glad year is done. We ſeize with joy
The precious interval, and ſhape our walk
At early ev'ning down the meadow path;
Till ſunk into the vale, faſt by the brook
We ſpy the blooming hop, and with light heart
The glorious garden enter. Tell me not,
Ye who, in love with wealth, your days conſume
Pent up in city ſtench, and ſmoke, and filth;
O tell me not of aught magnificent
Or fair as this, in all your public walks.
What are the charms your Ranelagh affords
Compar'd with ours? Search all your gardens round,
Ye ſhall not find e'en at your boaſted Vaux
A haunt ſo neat, ſo elegant as this.
Long let us ſtray, and frequently repeat
Our ev'nings homage to the blooming hop.

Spare

Spare him, ye ſwains, pernicious inſects ſpare,
Ye howling tempeſts, come not near my joy,
But let him hang till I have gaz'd my fill.
Then ſhall he fall, and his gay honours ſhed,
And your forbearance plenteouſly repay
With his abundant gold. Long let us ſtray,
Enjoy the grateful covert, and admire
The one continued cluſter over-head
Of bloſſoms interwoven, and depending
E'en to the touch and ſmell. Long let us ſtray,
And ever as we come to the flat mead
And quit the garden with reluctance, then
When we behold the ſmiling valley ſpread
In gay luxuriance far before us, ſheep
And oxen grazing, till the eye is ſtaid,
The ſinuous proſpect turning from the view,
And all above us to the right and left
Enchanted woodland to the topmoſt hill,
Then let the village bells, as often wont,
Come ſwelling on the breeze, and to the ſun

Half-ſet, ring merrily their ev'ning round.
I aſk not for the cauſe. It matters not
What ſwain is wedded, what gay laſs is bound
To love for ay, to cheriſh and obey.
It is enough for me to hear the ſound
Of the remote exhilarating peal,
Now dying all away, now faintly heard,
And now with loud and muſical relapſe
Its mellow changes pouring on the ear.

So have I ſtood at eve on Iſis' banks,
To hear the merry Chriſt-church bells ring round.
So have I ſat too in thy honour'd ſhades
Diſtinguiſh'd Magdalen, on Cherwell's brink,
To hear thy ſilver Wolſey tones ſo ſweet.
And ſo too have I paus'd and held my oar,
And ſuffer'd the ſlow ſtream to bear me home,
No ſpeed requir'd while Wykeham's peal was up.

NOW

NOW let September and October come,
Twin months of ſlaughter. Perſecution ſtarts,
And ere the dewy day be half awake
Begins her bloody work. The fields are throng'd
With licens'd murderers, who ſlay for ſport.
So when the jealous Herod gave the word,
The cruel ruffian thirſted for the blood
Of helpleſs innocents. And ſo the ſword,
Another Herod reigning, was let looſe,
To ſpill the blood of ſleeping Hugonots.
Alcanor joins them not. He envies none
The pleaſures of the field, and much admires
To hear the ſquabble and the loud harangue,
And all for game; to ſee the Britiſh ſoul
So puny grown, it quarrels for a feather.

'Tis

'Tis a mean wretch, and ſcarce deſerves to live
That cannot find amuſements void of pain.

O undeſerving parent, that neglects
To train the infant boy to deeds humane.
See how his ſports, his paſtimes, deareſt child,
Are all to be indulg'd, whether he chooſe
To whip his nurſe, to laſh the ſleeping puppy,
Or pinch the tail of unoffending puſs.
Go, catch the ſurly beetle, and ſuſpend
The harmleſs pris'ner by the wing or tail
To make the booby laugh. But if ſo loud
His well-deſerv'd rebuke, the timid child
Stands off alarm'd, then let him ſee thee cruſh
The thing he fears. Or give it liberty,
Not unconſtrained, as heav'n beſtow'd it. No,
Set the gall'd pris'ner free, but lock his chain
Full-faſt about him. Drive him to the field,
But pluck no arrow from his ſide. He's gone,
And feels that liberty is wond'rous ſweet,

Tho'

Tho' the crook'd pin faſt fixt, and trailing thread,
Admit no remedy. A while he lives—
His thread clings faſt—he flutters, faints and dies.
Go, Tom, a ladder bring, and reach the neſt.
'Tis but a ſparrow's, and 'twill ſerve
To pacify the boy. What if the dam
In patient expectation ſits, and hopes
Another day ſhall all her cares reward,
And bring to light her helpleſs progeny?
Forth from her high maternal office dragg'd
With rude indignity, behold ſhe comes
A joyful victim to the callous boy.
He with delight her ruffled plumes ſurveys,
Seizes her neſt, and the dear charge purloins;
Then with a frantic laugh down drops the eggs,
And blindfold hops to cruſh them as he goes.
Ah! hapleſs bird, yet happy ſtill, if this
Be all the pain thy cruel foe intends.
Ah! what avail'd thy labour of an age

To weave the genial neſt, with many a root
And many a ſtraw far-fetch'd? 'Twas all in vain.
Half-ſtarv'd Grimalkin claims thee for his prey,
And in his cruel paw faſt-clutch'd devours
Relentleſs. Or the boy aware, himſelf
Cuts ſhort exiſtence, and allots to puſs
Only the ſever'd head. Ingenious fool,
Pert executioner, behold the blood
Of parent, and of offspring. Grin amain;
O thou haſt done a deed that Heav'n abhors.
Let the wiſe parent laugh to ſee how well
His looby boy has learn'd to be humane.
Let him applaud the bloody deed, and ſpare
The well-earn'd rod. In thee, great ſtate,
Eternal glory of the Gentile world,
Juſt Athens, had the beardleſs boy preſum'd
A deed ſo villainous, the public arm
Had the mean youth chaſtis'd, till it had wak'd
A ſoul humane and ſenſible of wrong.

Behold

Behold and mark the ſturdy boy, at length
Grown up to man (if ſuch he may be call'd,
Poſſeſſing nothing human but the ſhape)
What are his ſports? and how delights the dunce
From morn to night to ſpend the live-long day?
Can the dark Ethiopian change his ſkin?
Or can the Leopard at his will be white,
And lay his ſpots aſide? From morn to eve
See how he toils with gen'rous intent
To be the murd'rer of the tim'rous hare,
To win the bruſh of Reynard nobly ſkill'd,
To vex the badger; or with cruel joy
Stoops o'er the cock-pit, eager to behold
The dying ſtruggles of poor Chanticleer.
'Twas nature taught the gen'rous bird to fight,
And drive the bold intruder from his rooſt,
In care for thee, mean wretch, who haſt ſupplied
The weapon nature kindly had refus'd,
Or made to ſtrike in vain. Now mark his gait,

When morning hardly dawns, and from the hutch
He lets the full-ear'd pointer looſe to range,
Well arm'd is he, within with morning dram,
Without with old ſurtout, thick ſhoes, and hoſe
Of leather, button'd to the buckſkin'd knee.
So forth he fares, brave knight; but firſt he primes
And loads his burniſh'd piece, then hangs his pouch,
His powder-horn, and whip with whiſtle tipt
On his broad ſhoulders. Let me not forget,
What he might well forget, th' important bag,
To be ere long (for ſo he thinks) well lin'd
With pheaſant, partridge, ſnipe, or tardy quail.
So mounts the popping Hudibras or ſtyle
Or crackling hedge, or leaps the muddy ditch,
His armor clatt'ring as he goes. I ſee
Where he has ſwept the ſilver dew away
Acroſs the paſture. Now he climbs the gate,
And heys his dog to run the ſtubble round,
While he ſtands ſtill, or ſcarcely moves a pace.

So have I ſeen the haſty minute-hand
Run round and round, while th' other idly ſtood,
Or ſeem'd to ſtand, and ever and anon
Bray'd loud to ſet him on his way again.
Take heed, take heed. With noſe infallible
The ſilent pointer winds toward the game.
Now motionleſs he ſtands, one foot lift up,
His noſtril wide-diſtended, and his tail
Unwag'd. Now ſpeed my hero of the gun,
And when the ſudden covey ſprings, let fly,
And miſs them all. O I rejoice to ſee
When our amuſements are ſo innocent
They give no pain at all. But ſpare the whip,
And if the wary covey ſprings too ſoon,
Let Sancho ſtill be ſafe; and let not rage
Prompt thee to ſtamp upon his guiltleſs neck
Till the blood iſſues from his mouth and noſe:
Much leſs let fly upon the faithful cur
The volley fate has ſpar'd, for he is ſtaunch,
And true to thee as thou art falſe to him.

O thoughtleſs world, that will not be at pains
To cultivate humanity in youth.
'Tis hence we laugh at woe, and ev'ry day
Unpitying hear the cries of half a world
Vex'd with the galling ſcourge of ſlavery.
My eye is caſt on Britain's weſtern iſles,
And I behold a patient ſlave grown faint
Under the laſh. Inhuman dog, forbear.
The man who now lies bleeding at thy feet
Was once a monarch. To the bloody field
He led a num'rous tribe, attach'd by deeds
Of pure affection to their leader. He
No laws of mutiny had fram'd, nor fear'd
To ſee deſertion thin his crowded ranks.
Bravely he fought, and hardly would ſubmit,
Surviving only he. Then firſt he knew
What 'twas to faint, when looking for his friends
He ſaw them dead and bleeding at his ſide.
Nor had he then let fall his well-ſtrung bow,
And ſhook the poiſon'd quiver from his ſide,

Were there one arrow left, or ſtill ſurviv'd
He for whoſe life and happineſs he fought,
His only ſon. Him reeking in his blood
The hapleſs monarch ſaw, and could no more.
Then ſpare him yet. What tho' he left his taſk,
And ſought the friendly ſhade to vent his grief
Yet recent. True, he ſlept, and at an hour
When all the world was buſy. 'Twas the call
Of ſympathizing nature, that would pour
One balm at leaſt upon his countleſs wounds.
Poor ſoul, he ſlept, and fancy to his mind
Brought back again the days he once had ſeen.
Forth from his hut he went, his only ſon
And wife (now more than widow) by his ſide.
He tipt his arrow, ſtrung his bow, and ſhot.
The ſtricken bird is her's, and her's the deer.
Theſe are his choiceſt gifts. With theſe he ſeeks
His humble palace once again; there ſits
And eats his plain and temperate repaſt,

And the too-fleeting hours beguiles with talk
Of twenty thouſand dangerous eſcapes
From cruel tiger, or more cruel man.
And was this little happineſs too much?
The ſword of juſtice ſurely will unſheath,
Nor fall in vain upon theſe guilty iſles.
Croſs not again the proud Atlantic wave,
With helliſh purpoſe to enſlave the free,
Or load the pris'ner with eternal chains,
For he is Man as thou art. Not for thee,
And only thee, did God's creative Word
Call into being this vaſt work, the world.
Nor yet for thee that Word incarnate ſhed
His precious blood. Go, falſe and cruel tyrant,
Reign in the forefts of thy native iſle,
And let the prowling ſavage reign in his.
Let him enjoy the little bliſs he owns,
Or give him more. Make not that little leſs,
For Adam was his ſire, and Adam thine;

And

And he ſhall ſhare redemption too with thee,
With thee, and me, and all this Gentile world,
If we deſerve to rank in brotherhood
With one we wrong ſo much. Content were he
To tread the burning deſert, feel the ſun
Shoot his fierce rays direct upon his head,
And earn the little plenty his wild ſtate
Affords, with hunter's toil. Content were he
To be an humble penſioner at beſt
Of the grim lion; but the curſed hand
Of brutal avarice that peace deſtroys,
That little peace the lordly lion ſpares.

September half run out, the day returns,
Remember'd oft with awful reverence
And pious love of thee, All-ſeeing Power,
Who follow'ſt virtue whereſoe'er ſhe roves,
Her ſhield and buckler. On the ſunny down
Eliza ſtray'd. Ah! why alone? 'Twas ſo

The tempter vanquiſh'd Eve; 'twas ſo ſhe fell.
She ſtray'd and mus'd, ſhe pluck'd a flow'r and ſung.
She knew no fear, accuſtom'd oft to range
The pleaſant hill, and deeming none leſs good,
Leſs honeſt than herſelf. But ſuch the world
We cannot find the place, howe'er remote
From public notice, that eſcapes the ſearch
Of prying luſt, and keeps ſecure and ſafe
The jewel virtue. An Hibernian whelp,
Strong as the tiger, ſubtle as the fox,
Saw and was pleas'd. No bar to him his vow
Made at the altar, to be conſtant ſtill
To her he wedded there. In his falſe heart
He fed adult'rous hope, he couch'd and ſlunk,
And with a leer the ſolitary down
Survey'd, far as the jealous eye can reach.
* So Satan lurk'd, and joy'd to find alone
Ingenious Eve; and he his proem tun'd

* Milton.

With

With flattery and lies, and ſo didſt thou.
Into the heart of Eve his words made way;
Eliza heard not thine. For ſhe had mark'd
And knew her tempter; ſhe had well obſerv'd,
Unknown to thee, thy often-practis'd wiles.
What wonder then thy eulogy was vain?
Thy large account of honour and of wealth
Mov'd only her deriſion, nor could win
One ſmile, one kiſs, one look of approbation.
Here had thy paſſion ceas'd, thou might'ſt at leaſt
Have challeng'd honour with the fiend of Hell.
But foil'd and ſtill repuls'd, thy baſer ſoul
Had meaner ſhifts to try. Her reaſon proof,
Thy next reſource unmanly violence.
What guilty marks left not thy greedy hand
Upon the fair one's arm? ſo mighty thou
To combat virtue, to aſſail a maid
No match for thee but in ſo good a cauſe.
Yet hadſt thou vanquiſh'd, but a pow'r unſeen

Approv'd

Approv'd her efforts, and reſiſted thine.
What ſaw'ſt thou, coward, to be put to flight
Swift as the hoſtile arrow? Mark my words.
The man of noble purpoſe nothing daunts,
No, not a falling world. He were compos'd
And ſtedfaſt as a rock, tho' floods of fire
The world and all its fellows ſwept away,
And he beheld a UNIVERSE IN FLAMES.
Then was the mighty foil'd, the cunning caught.
And yet he bluſhes not. Accus'd, he ſtarts,
Proteſts his innocence, appeals to juſtice,
Unlocks the copious fountain of his eye,
And who can ſay it is not ſtrange and piteous?
Yet why decays his honour ſpite of tears,
Of proteſtations and appeals, of threats,
And public inſolence? Ah me! I fear
Eliza may forgive thee, but in vain;
And tho' inſulted Juſtice ſlumber here,
She will arraign thee at the bar of Heaven,
And ſpite of Charity the wrong repay.

The

The happy morning comes, expected long
By lads and laſſes. Soon as light appears,
The ſwain is ready in his Sunday frock,
And calls on Nell to trip it to the fair.
The village bells are up, and jangling loud
Proclaim the holiday. The clam'rous drum
Calls to the puppet-ſhew. The groaning horn
And twanging trumpet ſpeak the ſale begun,
Of articles moſt rare and cheap. Dogs bark
Aſtounded at the noiſe. Old women laugh,
Boys ſhout, and the grave Doctor mounts with glee
His crowded ſcaffold, ſtruts, and makes a ſpeech,
Maintains the virtue of his ſalve for corns,
His worm-cake and his pills, puffs his known ſkill,
And ſhews his kettle, ſilver knives and forks,
Ladle and cream-pot, and to crown the whole,
The ſplendid tankard. Andrew grins, and courts
The gaping multitude, till Tom and Sue
And Abigail and Ned their ſhoulders ſhrug,

And

And laugh and whiſper, and reſolve to ſport
The ſolitary ſhilling. See produc'd
Their unwaſh'd handkerchiefs. Ah! ſimple ſwains,
Ah! ſilly maids, you laugh, but Andrew wins.
And what for you but ſorrow and remorſe,
Or box of ſalve to plaiſter diſappointment?
Unleſs the ſmart of folly may be ſooth'd
By Andrew's merry pranks, the dancing girl,
And frolic tumbler. Now the ſtreet is fill'd
With ſtalls and booths for gingerbread and beer,
Rear'd by enchantment, finiſh'd in a trice.
Amuſements here for children of all ſorts;
For little maſter's pence, a coach, a drum,
A horſe, a wife, a trumpet; dolls for miſs,
Fans, cups and ſaucers, kettles, maids and churns.
For idle ſchool-boys Punchinello rants,
The juggler ſhuffles, and the artful dame
Extends her lucky bag. For infants tall,
Of twenty years and upwards, rueful games,

To

To whirl the horſe-ſhoe, bowl at the nine-pins,
Game at the dial-plate, drink beer and gin,
Rant, rave, and ſwear, cudgel, get drunk and fight,
Then comes the aſs-race. Let not wiſdom frown
If the grave clerk look on, and now and then
Beſtow a ſmile; for we may ſee, Alcanor,
In this untoward race the ways of life.
Are we not aſſes all? we ſtart and run,
And eagerly we preſs to paſs the goal,
And all to win a bauble, a lac'd hat.
Was not great Wolſey ſuch? He ran the race
And won the hat. What ranting politician,
What prating lawyer, what ambitious clerk,
But is an aſs that gallops for a hat?
For what do Princes ſtrive, but gilded hats?
For diadems, whoſe bare and ſcanty brims
Will hardly keep the ſun-beam from their eyes.
For what do Poets ſtrive? a leafy hat,
Without or crown or brim, which hardly ſcreens
The empty noddle from the fift of ſcorn,

Much leſs repels the critic's thund'ring arm.
And here and there intoxication too
Concludes the race. Who wins the hat, gets drunk.
Who wins a laurel, mitre, cap, or crown,
Is drunk as he. So Alexander fell,
So Haman, Cæſar, Spenſer, Wolſey, James.

Now chilly ev'ning puts her grey coat on,
And from the eaſt advancing, puts to flight
The rear of day, girt with a zone of ſtars.
The buſy fair is ended. The rank booth
Spews out its beaſtly habitant, the mob
Diſperſe, and Andrew's merry pranks are done.
Home reels the drunken clown, or ſtays to fight,
Nothing the cauſe, yet honour much concern'd.
Confuſion reigns, uproar and loud mis-rule;
Diſtinctions ceaſe, and ſtill the oath, the ſcream,
The ſhout, the hoot, diſturb the midnight ear
Of ſober Cloe gone to bed betimes.

Such

Such was the time, ah me! when Dorothy,
The hubbub hardly ended, from her ſwain
The vow extorted to be ever her's.
Three times Alcanor's voice the banns proclaim'd,
And three times all were ſtill. Then to the church
The grinning bride was led, and faſt was tied,
Ah! much too faſt, the hymeneal knot.
Then grief was mine, grief inconſolable,
And ſleepleſs nights and inharmonious days.
For how could I rejoice, my charmer gone,
My Leſbia fled, my lovely Lalage,
My Sugareſſa, my dear Dorothy?

AH me! the golden year is done. Behold,
Gloomy and ſad November comes, with brow
Severe and clouded. Scarce a leaf ſuſtains
His peſtilential blaſt. The woods are ſtript,
And all their honours ſhatter'd in the vale.
The meſſenger of ſurly Winter he,
And in his hand he bears the nipping froſt.
Before his tyrant lord he ſcatters fleet,
And with a hideous frown bids Autumn ſpeed,
And after her runs howling thro' the land.

The field has loſt its verdure. All the pride
Of the ſweet garden fades. Where now the roſe,
The pink, the ſtock, the lupin, or the pea,
Or gay chryſanthemum? Where now the comb,

The

The aſter, larkſpur, balſam, or carnation?
Or where the lilly with her ſnowy bells?
Where the gay jaſmin, odorous ſyringa,
Graceful laburnum, or bloom-clad arbute?
Or if we ſtray, where now the Summer's walk
So ſtill and peaceable, at early eve
Along the ſhady lane, or thro' the wood,
To pluck the ruddy ſtrawberry, or ſmell
The perfum'd breeze that all the fragrance ſtole
Of honey-ſuckle, bloſſom'd beans, or clover?
Where now the bluſh of Spring, and the long day
Beloiter'd? chearful May that fill'd the woods
With muſic, ſcatter'd the green vale with flow'rs,
And hung a ſmile of univerſal joy
Upon the cheek of nature? Where blooms now
The king-cup and the daiſy? Where inclines
The harebell or the cowſlip? Where looks gay
The vernal furze with golden baſkets hung?
Where captivates the ſky-blue periwinkle
Under the cottage eaves? Where waves the wood,

Or rings with harmony the merry vale?
Day's harbinger no ſong attunes; no ſong
Or ſolo anthem deigns ſweet Philomel.
The golden wood-pecker laughs loud no more.
The pye no longer prates; no longer ſcolds
The ſaucy jay. Who ſees the goldfinch now
The feather'd groundſil pluck, or hears him ſing
In bow'r of apple bloſſoms perch'd? Who ſees
The chimney-haunting ſwallow ſkim the pool,
And quaintly dip, or hears his early ſong
Twitter'd to young-eyed day. All, all are huſh'd.
The very bee her merry toil foregoes,
Nor ſeeks her nectar, to be ſought in vain.
Only the ſolitary robin ſings,
And perch'd aloft with melancholy note
Chants out the dirge of Autumn; cheerleſs bird,
That loves the brown and deſolated ſcene,
And ſcanty fare of Winter. Let me weep
With you, ye Muſes, and with you, ye fair,
Chief mourner at the grave of her we love,

Expiring

Expiring nature. For ye ſought with me
The ſober twilight of the ſhelving wood,
With me forſook the glare of ſultry day;
To tread the ſerious gloom Religion loves,
And where ſhe ſmiles and wipes her dewy eye,
With meditation walking hand in hand.
Ye too have lov'd and heartily approv'd
The winding foot-path, and the ſudden turn,
The green-ſward waggon-way and gothic aiſle;
And heard me comment on the leaf, the branch,
The arm, the girth of the paternal oak.
Ye too, have lov'd the long accuſtom'd gap,
That all ſo unexpectedly preſents
The clear cerulean proſpect down the vale.
Oft have ye ſtood upon the ſhaggy brow
Of yonder wood-clad hill, to gaze with me
Athwart the wide and far extended view,
That ocean ſkirts or blue downs indiſtinct.
Oft have ye look'd with tranſport pure as mine
Into the flow'ry dell. But ah! no more

Tells whither ſhe led up her heav'nly bard
To viſit light and draw empyreal air;
Or whither Newton, more than mortal then,
When muſing as he ſat, ſhe ſhook the tree,
And dropt an apple, and her ſtudious child
Caught up to heav'n. 'Tis pleaſant to remark
How early genius plumes her for the flight
And tries her ſhort excurſions, fearful yet
And little on her wing confiding, now
Full-fledg'd and dauntleſs, cutting thro' the clouds
And peering in the eye of heav'n itſelf.
Sagacious Newton, let me muſe with thee,
And wonder at thy quick and piercing eye
Cleans'd of its mortal film. Who does not wiſh
Like thee to penetrate the dark abode
Of clouded myſtery, and in his word
And works unfold the awful Deity.

But not at Newton only to admire,
Ye ſtudious fair, we love, but ſometimes laugh

At

At Brahe and Deſcartes; praiſe the ſtrong eye
Of Galileo, and applaud the ſpeed
Of buſy Wilkins, poſting like a witch
Upon a reſtive broom-ſtick to the Moon.

And ſometimes thee, ingenious Boyle, we hear,
Maintaining truth and ſifting nature; thee
Sometimes, whoſe patriotic genius foil'd
Aſſailant Rome, and almoſt ſav'd the ſtate
Of falling Syracuſe: then travel round
The univerſal globe, at ev'ry ſhore
Taking large draughts of ſtory and of ſong.
But chiefly thee we love, majeſtic Britain,
Wedded to Neptune, and thy thund'ring fleets
Follow exulting to the hoſtile ſhore;
Now bear thee company to fartheſt Ind,
Or to the frozen pole, or round the cape
Of utmoſt Horn, with philoſophic touch
Converting droſs to gold: now diſembark,
And march with Harry to the heart of France,

And

And beard the wordy Monarch on his throne.
And now we follow to the cannon's mouth,
Tremendous Marlb'rough; or ſtand by, and ſee
The living Elliot ſcare his foe to death
With everlaſting ſhow'r of burning hail.
And many more we praiſe, and ſome accuſe
Whoſe names and deeds my ſpeedy muſe ſings not.

And now morality we love, and truth,
And ſerious argument, and grave debate;
What Mede or Newton with prophetic eye
Divine, what Hales or Tillotſon adviſe.
Anon we ſmile with zealous Latimer,
Or ſilent Addiſon, then range at large
Cervantes, Sidney, Bacon, Fenelon,
And twenty thouſand more choice wits and rare.

But chiefly thee, immortal Shakeſpear, thee
We love and honour, Nature's darling child,
And ſtill we court thy Muſe and ſtill applaud,

Whether

Whether the gentle Portia tread the ſtage
With bloody Shylock, or Vincentio wed
The virtuous Iſabel. Whether thy fays
Dance to the Moon, or Proſpero diſpatch
His ſight-outrunning Ariel to the deep,
The while the generous Miranda cheers
Her fainting Ferdinand. Whether the Duke
And gloomy Jaques confer, and Roſalind
Laughs at her ſighing lover in diſguiſe;
Or ſmiling Perdita comes tripping by
With mint and marj'ram, roſemary and rue,
Or Viola that never told her love,
But let concealment like a worm i' th' bud
Feed on her damaſk cheek. With hearty laugh
We ſtill diſmiſs the ſtill outwitted rogue,
But ſtill pretending Falſtaff. Then we trace
With terror and applauſe, the bloody deeds
Of civil rage, and full of horror ſee
Thy mailed Mars upon his altar ſit
Up to the ears in blood; the fatal cauſe

Aſpiring

Aſpiring Bolingbroke. Thence wrath enſued,
And frequent bickering and ſtedfaſt hate.
The lie reſounded and the gauntlet fell,
And ev'ry tongue cried traitor. To the field
They ruſh'd, and all their blades athirſt drank blood.
So Percy fell, and old Northumberland,
Three Dukes of Somerſet three-fold renown'd,
Two Cliffords, virtuous Humphry, Suffolk, York.
So Montague and Warwick, two brave bears,
That in their chains fetter'd the kingly lion,
And made the foreſt tremble when they roar'd.
Then comes deſpotic Richard, in thy lines,
Great bard, ſupremely horrible, his eye
Still bent on ſlaughter, tho' his reeking blade
Has loſt its edge by uſe, and his faint arm
Claims reſpite. Wolſey then the fall laments
Of earthly grandeur, and the favour loſt
Of princely Harry, and we too lament.
Then pitied and applauded, Timon raves;
And noble Coriolanus ſcorns the ſhout

Of

Of popular applauſe, thence baſely doom'd
To baniſhment and death. Then Brutus ſtrikes,
And bleeding Julius, looking for his friend,
Dies by his hand. In hurly-burly then,
With ghoſts and witches circled round, Macbeth
In fiery ſtorm ſtalks by, with tim'rous eye
And fretful conſcience, ſhunning the decree
Of blood for blood. Then Imogen delights,
And eagerly we trace th' eventful ſcene,
Till all winds up into a happy cloſe.
Not ſuch the fortune of afflicted Lear
And poor Cordelia, of thy injur'd wife
Jealous Othello, of the maid diſtraught
Ophelia, or thy bride that ſlept with death,
Too haſty Romeo. Yet theſe delight,
And in their dread cataſtrophe diſpenſe
Wholeſome correction to the bleeding heart.

The Poet ſilent, long with rapture heard,
The Shakeſpear of another art ſucceeds.

Sweet muſic wakes, and with tranſporting air
Handel begins. What mortal is not rapt
To hear his tender wildly-warbled ſong
Where'er he ſtrays; but chiefly when he ſings
Meſſiah come, and with amazing ſhout
Proclaims him King of Kings, and Lord of Lords,
For ever and for ever, Hallelujah.
Great ſoul, O ſay from what immortal fount
Thou haſt deriv'd ſuch never-failing power
To win the ſoul, and bear it on the wings
Of pureſt extacy, beyond the reach
Of ev'ry human care. From whence thine art
To lift us from the earth, and fix us there
Where pure devotion with unſparing hand
Pours on the altar of the living God
The hallow'd incenſe of the grateful heart.
O mighty Handel, what ſeraphic power
Gave inſpiration to thy ſacred ſong?
Thyſelf perchance was ſome ſupernal ſpirit,
Permitted to reſide on earth awhile,

To

To teach us here what Muſic is in Heaven.
If ev'ry Angel that attends the throne
Of clouded Deity, ſuch ſong inſpire,
Let but our mortal ears one chorus hear,
And all the world were gather'd into Heaven.
The very Devils ſurely were drawn up
To liſten at the golden doors of light,
And Hell left waſteful, wide, and deſolate.

Corelli, ſweet harmonious bird, thee too
We hear delighted, and thy mellow ſtrains
Deem no mean recompenſe for the loſt ſong
Of lark and nightingale. Thy air repeat,
And let judicious diſcord ſtill commend
Triumphant harmony, till Winter's ſelf
Be won like us, and ſmooth his rugged brow,
And all his hours enchanted fleet away,
Soft as his fur, and quiet as his ſnow.

And oft we feel the ſoul-ſubduing power
Of vocal harmony, breath'd ſoftly forth

Wit

With equable accord, without or art,
Or quaint embelliſhment, ſave only ſuch
As Nature dictates, and without deſign
Lets fall with eaſe, in her impaſſion'd mood.
Then ſerious glee and elegy delight;
Or pious anthem ſuch as Croft inſpires,
Or graver Purcel, or endearing Clark.
The noble harmony of Brewer, Eſte,
Webbe, Baildon, Ravenſcroft, we hear
With ever-new delight. Briſk canzonet
Then pleaſes, gay duet, or Highland air
Divinely warbled, and with cadence ſweet
And tender pauſe drawn out by one we love,
Spontaneous and unaſk'd. And oft the ſoul
With patriotic ardor glows, and pants
For glory, honor, and immortal deeds,
Tranſported at the ſound of martial ſtrains
With ſudden burſt commenc'd, and moving ſlow
With ſolemn grandeur and majeſtic pomp
To an obſtreperous rebounding cloſe.

But

But who ſhall tell in ſimple ſong like mine,
The many ſhapes that muſic, Proteus-like,
Puts on, with grateful change of ſubject, time,
Contrivance, mood, ſoothing the captive ear,
And filling the rapt ſoul with fare ſo ſweet
That ſtill ſhe feeds and hungers. Human tongue
Shall hardly tell what infinite delight
Sweet Muſic yields, for ever faſhioning
Her ſober pleaſures to the various mind.
What wonder then the ſulky wheels of time
Fly glibly round, the drowſy pendulum
Foregoes his old vexatious click unheeded,
And the ſhrill-ſounding bell rings out apace
The brief accompliſh'd hours. By Muſic won,
Decrepit Time forgets his annual gout,
Renews his dance, and with a noiſeleſs foot
Hies ſpeedily away.

I have not told,
How oft we liſten to the muſty ſong

Of ancient bards, nor think we need excuſe
To honour merit in her home-ſpun ſuit.
And chiefly we eſteem thy fairy ſong,
Immortal Spenſer, in rude guiſe yclad.
Then the fierce knight comes pricking o'er the plain,
Drad for his derring do and bloody deed.
And now the combat 'gins, and cruel arms
The recreant knight o'erwhelm in uncouth fray.
The caſtle falls, and many a maid is won,
And many a maid is loſt thro' dire miſhap.

Then comes a troop in gilded uniform,
The goodly band Johnſonian. Cowley firſt,
Poetic child, whoſe philoſophic muſe
Diſtracts, delights, torments, and captivates.
Let me attend, when from the world retir'd,
He turn'd his reſtive Pegaſus to graze,
And thought, and wrote, ſedate and ſober proſe.
Comes Milton next, that like his wakeful bird
Sings darkling, ſings and mourns his eye-ſight loſt.

And

And nightly wanders to the muſes' haunt,
Clear ſpring, or ſhady grove, or ſunny hill,
Smit with the love of ſacred ſong; to us
Diſplaying nature, and the bliſsful ſcenes
Of Paradiſe, tho' not to him returns
Day, or the ſweet approach of ev'n or morn,
Or ſight of vernal bloom, or ſummer's roſe,
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine.
Sweet bard, that bears us ſoftly now, and ſmooth
As that unwrinkled flood that ſlowly winds
By Windſor's haughty tow'rs, and viſits ſhores
Divinely various—ruſhes now, and leaps,
Aſtounding ſenſe, immeaſurable depth,
A foaming cataract, whoſe thund'ring fall
Confounds all hell, and utmoſt earth and heaven.
Comes Butler then, incomparable wit,
And not to be reprov'd, ſave when his muſe
Decorum overleaps, and here and there
Bolts the coarſe jeſt, to the chaſte eye and ear
Offenſive: for behind the comic maſk

We find the ſcholar and the man of ſenſe,
The friend of virtue, and the foe of vice.
Then follows courtly Waller, and in vain
On Amoret or Sacchariſſa calls,
With budget full of trifles, birth-day odes,
Congratulations, ſongs, and compliments,
And mythologic tales. Then Denham charms,
And from his own Parnaſſus, Cooper's hill,
Sings the wide proſpect that extended lies
Under his proud ſurvey. Then Sprat. And then
Roſcommon fills with elegant remark,
His verſe as elegant; unſpotted lines
Flow from a mind unſpotted as themſelves.
Then Wilmot tunes his reed, and in his ſong
Gives early promiſe of a genius, rare
And turn'd for excellence. But ah! how vain
All human hopes! The prime of life is ſpent,
His talent waſted, and the giddy fool
Grows old in pleaſure, and denies his God.
The grave in view, an honeſt friend his guide,

He

He views his conduct with remorſe, repents,
Acknowledges his fault, curſes the wit
Of feeble man that ſo outwits itſelf,
And dies a martyr to the pains of vice.
Then Yalden ſings, and fills us with delight,
His harp ſo tun'd that as the morning breaks
It moves ſpontaneous rapture, and again
At ev'ning cloſe with ſolemn eulogy
Welcomes the reign of night. With weeping eye
But harlot cheek, then Otway's muſe appears
And charms the hearer with her Syren ſong,
To decency, alas, no friend, to vice
No enemy. His Celia then proclaims
Enamour'd Duke, at Floriana's grave
Strewing ſweet flow'rs and ſweeter verſe. Then ſings
The gen'rous Dorſet, ſings and ſings too much,
Scarce heard an hour. Chaſte Montague ſucceeds,
Stepney leſs pure, and Walſh, with feeble wing,
Half flying, half on foot. Then comes a bard,
Worn out and pennileſs, and poet ſtill
Tho' bent with years, and in impetuous rhyme

Pours out his unexhauſted ſong. What muſe
So flexible, ſo generous as thine,
Immortal Dryden. From her copious fount
Large draughts he took, and unbeſeeming ſong
Inebriated ſang. Who does not grieve,
To hear the foul and inſolent rebuke
Of angry ſatire from a bard ſo rare?
To trace the lubricous and oily courſe
Of abject adulation, the lewd line
Of ſhameleſs vice, from page to page? and find
The judgment brib'd, the heart unprincipled,
And only loyal at th' expence of truth,
Of juſtice, and of virtue? Meaner ſtrain
The dapper wit commends of ſprightly Garth.
We ſmile to ſee fantaſtic poetry
Shake hands with phyſic, and with grave burleſque
Arrange his gallipots, and gild his pills;
Then march in dreadful armor to the field,
To ſcreen her new ally from hoſtile ſhocks,
With peſtle truncheon, Cloacinian helm,

And

And levell'd ſquirt. Then heartily we laugh,
With laughter-loving King, and much applaud
That vein of mirth which, innocent and clear,
In ſilver decence flows. Young Phillips then,
Things unattempted yet in proſe or rhyme,
A ſhilling, breeches, and chimæras dire,
Sings gravely jocund. Diſmal Rag applauds,
With ſympathetic ardor touch'd, at ſound
Of tatter'd galligaſkins, college duns,
And ſubtle catchpole. Modeſt Pomfret then,
To ſoar aloft unable, with light wing
Above the plain ſcarce elevated ſkims,
A ſhort and feeble flight. So have I ſeen
The ſpaniel-hunted quail with lowly wing
Shear the ſmooth air: and ſo too have I heard
That ſhe can ſweetly clamour, tho' compell'd
To tread the humble vale, nor ever mount
High as the ev'ning ſwift or morning lark.
Then blameleſs Hughes, in league with Pepuch, ſings,
And to the eloquent orcheſtra tunes
His virtuous, unmeaning ſong. And now

In tones that might attract an angel's ear,
Flows the ſmooth ſtrain of righteous Addiſon.
Then Blackmore ſings an everlaſting tale,
Bleſt with a callous muſe. Genius in vain
Laughs at the proud attempt, for ſtill he bawls,
And with gigantic diſſonance ſubdues
The univerſal hiſs. No poet ſure,
But mark the man, and you ſhall find him good.
And what's the poet if the man be naught?
Let Buckingham reply. Genius and wit
May flouriſh for a day, and ſnatch the wreath
From awkward honeſty. But ſoon ſhall fade
The eaſy laurels of a vicious muſe,
While amaranthine honours crown the brow
Of unpoetic virtue; Waller's muſe
In courteous Granville lives, and ſtill we hear
Of Jove and Juno, Mercury and Mars,
And all the nauſeous mythologic rout.
May he that loves hereafter, never win
The angel he adores, if in his ſong
Be aught of pagan ornament diſplay'd.

May he be curs'd like you, unlucky bards,
Be Sacchariſſa's dupe, and Myra's ſcorn.
Who can refuſe applauſe to tragic Rowe?
Who can withhold his honeſt praiſe from thee,
Tickel, thou friend of Addiſon, and virtue?
Who is not ſtartled at the fertile wit
Of beardleſs Congreve? and who does not grieve
It was not drawn in the defence of virtue?
How ſweet the muſic of thy happy lines,
Poetic Prior; full of mirth thy muſe,
And exquiſite her jeſt. Ah! hear it not,
Ye ſober fair, for fulſome is the tale,
And only fit for the diſtemper'd ear
Of jolly libertines. His graver ſong
Applaud unſatisfied, and ever laugh
To ſee him mount the furious Pegaſus
Pindaric, often tried, but tried in vain,
And never to be tam'd by crazy wits.
'Twas an unruly and a hard-mouth'd horſe,
'And flung his rider if he ſat not ſure,'
Dan Cowley ſaid. Yet up ſprung Mat, reſolv'd.

* O'er ſea and land with an unbounded looſe,
Runs the mad ſteed, a Gilpin race I ween.
Hardly the Muſe can ſit the head-ſtrong horſe.
See, now ſhe gallops round the Belgic ſhore,
Now thro' the raging ocean ploughs her way,
To rough Ierne's camps; there ſounds alarms,
In the dank marſhes finds her glorious theme,
And plunges after him thro' Boyne's fierce flood.
Back to his Albion then, then with ſtiff wing
Eaſt, over Danube and Propontis' ſhores,
From the Mœotis to the northern ſea,
To viſit the young Muſcovite; thence up,
Reſolv'd to reach the high empyrean ſphere,
And aſk for William an Olympic crown.
Till loſt in trackleſs fields of ſhining day,
Unhors'd, and all aghaſt, down, down ſhe comes,
Comes ruſhing with uncommon ruin down.
Glorious attempt, but not unhappy fate.
'Twas lucky, Mat, thou had'ſt not giv'n a name
To ſome Icarian gulf, or ſhook at leaſt

* *See his* Carmen Seculare for the year 1700.

The

The cruel man to hate, that he had limp'd,
And lamely hobbled to the verge of life.
But, thank our ſtars, thy pace is even yet,
And happily the Muſe her mirthful ſong
In durance vile prolongs. So have I heard
The captive finch, in narrow-cage confin'd,
Charm all his woe away with cheerful ſong,
Which might have melted e'en a heart of ſteel
To give him liberty. Hence, hence, away
Ye meaner wits, hide your diminiſh'd heads,
See genius ſelf approaches. Homer's ſoul
A puny child informs. Let envy laugh
To ſee an urchin ugly as herſelf
The glory of our iſle. For thee, great bard,
We twine the laurel wreath, and grant it thine
Thrice-won. Shall any mortal tongue preſume
To ſcatter cenſure on thy charming page?
Hark, 'tis the din of twenty thouſand curs
Who bark at excellence. Who beſt deſerves
Muſt feel the ſcourge of infinite abuſe,
For man to man is fiercer than the wolf,

More cruel than the tiger. Who can brook
The ſight of aught more worthy than himſelf?
Invite an angel from the courts of heaven,
Our critic eye ſhall ſpy a thouſand faults
Where not a fault exiſts. Miſtake me not,
I call not thee an angel, haughty bard,
Thy deeds were human. With an honeſt heart
I love the poet, but deteſt the man.
Thy purer lays, what mortal can deſpiſe,
Thy baſer ſong what mortal can approve,
Thou witty, dirty, patriotic Dean?
Laugh on, laugh on. With pencil exquiſite
Deſcribe the features of adopted vice,
And overbearing folly. Give the fair,
The peerleſs Stella, everlaſting worth,
Deride thy narrow paper-ſparing friend,
And gall the great. But why ſhall thy ſweet Muſe
Turn ſcavenger, and the foul kennel rake
For themes and ſimiles? What heart but grieves,
To find an equal portion in thy ſong
Of elegantly fair and groſsly foul?

Now honeſt Gay, a city ſhepherd, ſings,
Nor ſings in vain to us. In Arcady
We love to ſtray, and dream of happy days
No eye has ſeen, no heart has felt. We love
The land of Fairy, and the puny deeds
Of dapper elves. Whate'er the frantic poet
In his wild mood imagines, we applaud.
Nor wholly ſcorn with Gay or Broome, to ſtray,
Or Ambroſe Philips, thro' enchanted land
To painted meadows, flow'ry lawns and hills,
To cryſtal floods, cool groves, and ſhady bow'rs,
And rills that babble, tinkle, purl, and murmur.
How ſweet the ſong that from thy mellow pipe,
Dear Parnel flow'd. Death heard, and was amaz'd,
And his ſtone couch forſook, all wonder now,
And now all envy. Sure he thought no bard
Of mortal mixture could ſuch tones create.
Or if of mortal mixture, he had liv'd
More than the days of man, and ſtol'n from years
Due to the reign of ſilence and of death,
Song ſo divine. With the bad thought poſſeſs'd,

He whet his arrow on a flint, advanc'd,
And flung it greedily, his lipleſs jaws
Grinding with hate. So fell betimes the bard,
So triumph'd death, and at the bloody deed
Shook his lean bones with laughter. Curſed fiend,
Thou bane of excellence, go hence, and laugh;
Yet ſhall the pious poet ſing again,
And thou ſhalt hear, and with eternal wrath
Ay burning, dance with agony, and gnaw,
Howling for pain, the adamantine gates
Of treble-bolted Hell.

Away, kind bards;
Enough of you, nor ſhall your ſong beguile
One moment more; for ſee again ſweet Spring
Laughs at our window, and with roſy hand
Shews the full bloſſom and the budded leaf.
Away, away. Some wint'ry day be thine,
Deſcriptive Thomſon; ſome December night,
Thine, pious Young; ſome melancholy morn
In mat'ry fog wrapt up, thine, orphan Savage.

Be thou our cloſe companion, Shenſtone, thou,
Sweet bard of Hagley, in the hawthorn ſhade
Some weary Summer's noon. Be thou our gueſt,
Impetuous Akenſide, ſome gloomy eve,
When the red lightning ſcarce begins to glare,
And the mute thunder hardly deigns to growl.
Rais'd by thy torrent ſong, we ſhall enjoy
The loud increaſing horrors of the ſtorm,
Awfully grand. At ſuch a time thee too,
Rapt in ferocious extacy, we call,
Terrific Gray, to ſweep thy ſullen lyre,
And give to madneſs the diſtracted ſoul.
Repoſe at leiſure, ye inferior bards,
Till Summer's beauty flies, and the green wood
Scatters her recent honours to the breeze.

So have I gayly ſung the man how bleſt,
The Village Curate; weaving in my ſong
Your praiſe, ye fair, and many an honeſt thought
Which unſolicited demanded room.

I care